

THE SOCIAL GOALS OF CHILDREN:
A NATURALISTIC STUDY OF
CHILD-TO-CHILD INTERACTION IN A KINDERGARTEN

BY

J. AMOS HATCH

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This dissertation is dedicated to Chester and Colleen Hatch. Their lives have taught me the nobility of fighting the good fight. My small victories are theirs as well.

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J. Amos Hatch

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The study was a naturalistic investigation of child-to-child interaction in a kindergarten classroom. Passive participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, and unobtrusive data collection were the research methods used in the study. Data for the study were collected over a five month period and included field note records of 80 hours of children's conversations recorded in a variety of school settings.

The goal of the study was to provide a descriptive analysis of children's interactive behavior from the perspective of the children themselves. As the study evolved, it focused on the objectives children sought to fulfill in face-to-face contacts with peers. Data analysis revealed children's social goals which were divided into three basic areas: affiliation goals--to feel that they were connected with others, that others perceived them as worthy social interactants, and that others cared about them and wanted to do things with them; competence goals--to feel that they were competent individuals, capable of accomplishing school

tasks, and that they were recognized as members of the group which was achieving what was expected in school; and status goals--to feel that they were superior to or more important than others, that they were able to manipulate or control the actions of others, and that they were able to assert their own status in relationship to the status of others. The findings of the study include descriptions of children's strategies for accomplishing social goals in each area.

The following general conclusions were drawn from the findings: (a) children placed a high value on affiliation, competence, and status in relationships with their peers; (b) children's interactions were responsive, not egocentric; (c) children's strategies for accomplishing social goals revealed capacities for reasoning and perspective taking; (d) children's knowledge of adult interaction patterns was substantial, yet incomplete; and (e) children demonstrated their capacities for generating and understanding messages communicated at a symbolic, ceremonial level.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND FOR A STUDY OF CHILD-TO-CHILD INTERACTION IN CLASSROOM CONTEXTS

The social development of students is a theme which finds its way into the philosophy statements of virtually every public educational institution. An elementary school faculty would not think of leaving "social" out of the following belief statement. "We believe it is our responsibility to develop programs which contribute to the mental, physical, social, moral, and emotional growth of each child" (Pinedale, 1976-1977, p. 44). American educators historically have stressed the importance of providing school experiences which help students develop the social skills necessary to function effectively in their society (Caswell & Campbell, 1937; Hamilton, 1983; Mann, 1849).

While there may be consensus on the importance of developing social competence in school, little evidence exists that teachers and other educational decision makers understand the complexity of social behavior. Providing environments and experiences specifically designed to enhance the social development of students is a complicated task. Social scientists and educational researchers who might serve to inform classroom practitioners have not given much attention to children's social development (Denzin, 1977). This lack of knowledge and understanding of children's social

behavior prevents teachers and others who influence teaching from providing educational environments and experiences which recognize the social dimension of childhood.

In an effort to improve scientific understanding of social processes in school, researchers from the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and education have begun to study social interaction as it occurs within the natural settings of classrooms. This research can provide educational practitioners with information and understanding about the complex dynamics of social interaction in school settings. The goal of this study was to contribute to the research on child-to-child social behavior by providing a descriptive analysis of peer interaction in a kindergarten classroom. The general question which guided the design and implementation of the study was: What are the character and nature of student-to-student interactions in the classroom being investigated?

Rationale

Human beings are social animals. The ability to effectively interact with others is a defining characteristic of healthy, well-adjusted individuals. Full participation in our society requires considerable interpersonal competence. Weinstein (1969) argued that the acquisition of interpersonal skills is central to the processes of socialization. In his words,

if the socialization process is defined as equipping individuals to function as participating members of society, no set of skills is as essential to participating

in society as the skills enabling people to get others to think, feel, or do what they want them to. (p. 753)

Interpersonal or social competence involves a complex array of understandings and skills. Goffman (1981) studied face-to-face social interactions and offered the following description of the complexity of interaction among adults.

Everyone knows that when individuals in the presence of others respond to events, their glances, looks, and postural shifts carry all kinds of implications and meaning. When in these settings words are spoken, then tone of voice, manner of uptake, restarts, and the variously positioned pauses similarly qualify. As does the manner of listening. Every adult is wonderfully accomplished in producing all of these effects, and wonderfully perceptive in catching their significance when performed by accessible others. (pp. 1-2)

When Goffman used the phrase "every adult," he sent the implicit message that every child may not be so accomplished in producing and perceiving the effects described. This raises an important question related to this and other studies of child-to-child interaction. What are the processes by which children learn and internalize the complex social skills required for effective interpersonal interaction?

The school contributes in large measure to the general socialization of children and to the development of children's social competence. As children begin their public school careers, they bring with them a wide variety of experiences and express divergent levels of social knowledge

and skill development. For even the most socially sophisticated of kindergarteners, the school context provides a challenging new set of social norms, constraints, and practices to be learned and internalized (Mehan, 1982; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982). For children entering school from home contexts which differ widely from those of the classroom, the challenge is especially large (Philips, 1972). It is the responsibility of the school to assist all children in developing their individual capabilities to become competent social interactants.

As children in school interact with adults and with their peers, they are shaping and reshaping their knowledge about social interchange. They are formulating and reformulating understandings about their relationships to those with whom they interact. They are experimenting with and practicing behaviors which grow into a repertoire of social expression. The process of social learning is ongoing. It happens whenever the child is involved in contexts in which interaction takes place. Children spend large percentages of their time in classrooms; therefore a large portion of their formative social experience necessarily takes place in these classrooms.

When children interact within the contexts of the school room, they are learning and practicing behaviors which form important foundations upon which social interactions throughout their lives will be based. It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of helping children develop their

social competence and a positive notion about where they belong in relationship to those around them.

Teachers seem to recognize the importance of social development but not quite know what to do about it. In order for teachers and other educational decision makers to address in an active way the development of interpersonal competence in children, understandings of the forms and functions of child-to-child interaction must be improved.

Katz (1979) made an interesting distinction between schools and other agencies which contribute to the socialization of children. She argued education is different from other socializing institutions because

its activities are intentional and deliberate. This characteristic implies that most of what we do as educators should be rationalized, i.e., should be thought through in terms of what we intend to accomplish. Our reasoning should be on the basis of our understandings of how children grow, learn, and develop. These understandings are sharpened by the findings of our "supply" disciplines such as child or developmental psychology, social psychology, anthropology, and sociology.
(p. 102)

If educational practice is to be "intentional and deliberate," it must be informed.

Face-to-face interaction among children within the context of the classroom is a complex area of inquiry to which little scientific attention has been paid. Educational practitioners have not had a firm theoretical or research-based foundation from which to make classroom decisions related to social development. They have not been able to bring

intentionality and deliberateness to their teaching in large measure because they have been without the knowledge and understanding needed for informed classroom practice.

Garnica and King (1979) summarized the importance of research which is focused on the social contexts of education as follows: "It is an important venture for educational researchers and teachers whose need it is to understand the educational setting and convert this understanding into a form that can be acted upon directly" (p. xiii).

The goal of this study was to provide a detailed description and sociological analysis of peer interaction in a kindergarten classroom, and in doing so, to contribute to the knowledge base of social interaction in classroom settings. This and other studies of child-to-child interaction within classroom contexts can provide educators with information and insight which may be important as decisions are made with regard to instructional goals and practices and the establishment of classroom environments. This study was designed to add information and insight through an in-depth naturalistic investigation into the social structures of a kindergarten classroom. The study sought to generate information which can be used to inform classroom practice so that educators may provide experiences which serve to move closer to the goal of maximizing social development.

Definitions: Interaction,
Communicative Competence, and Context

The subject of interest in this study was the face-to-face social behavior of five- and six-year-old children in

a kindergarten classroom. Face-to-face interaction has been defined by Goffman (1959) as "the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (p. 15). Individuals in face-to-face contact create and maintain social events through the give and take of communicative interchange. Face-to-face interaction is the medium through which communicative competence is learned and practiced. In a study wherein the social behavior of children is the object of investigation, face-to-face or child-to-child interaction provides the substance to be examined.

Communicative competence is a concept which is important to this study. Beginning from the proposition that the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of social contexts is learned, the social development of children can be tied to the acquisition and refinement of communicative competence. Shultz, Florio, and Erickson (1982) define communicative or interactive competence as "all of the kinds of communicative knowledge that individual members of a cultural group need to possess to be able to interact with one another in ways that are both socially appropriate and strategically effective" (p. 88). These authors identify three aspects of communicative knowledge that are important:

- (a) knowledge of assumptions about proper ways for people to interact in various social occasions, (b) possession of the verbal and nonverbal performance skills necessary for producing appropriate communicative action, and (c)

possession of the interpretive skills necessary for making sense of the communicative intentions of others (Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982).

Communicative competence is always context-specific. That is, communicative competence can only be understood in relation to an individual's behavior in a particular context (Bondy, 1983). The notion of context, then, is important to the present study.

Context is a complex concept which is difficult to define. A context always includes the physical setting in which social action occurs, a set of participants and their relationships to one another, and the activity or task in which participants are involved (Bondy, 1983). Bloome (1982) offers the following definition which unites physical setting, participants, and task with characteristics of interaction and communicative knowledge outlined above.

First, contexts are the interpretive frameworks or schema that a person uses to make sense of phenomena. Second, contexts are the interactive behavior of individuals engaged in face-to-face interaction. That is, contexts are constituted by what people are doing, what they hold each other accountable for doing, and how they react to each other during face-to-face interaction. A third component is the constraints--norms, categories for interpretation, expectations for interaction, etc.--that emanate from outside of the face-to-face level of interaction. (p. 9)

Contexts are created and modified by individuals through interpersonal interaction. They are complex and dynamic entities which are redefined from moment to moment as individuals move in and out of conversations (Erickson & Shultz, 1981). In this study of child-to-child interaction,

the contexts explored were limited to those which developed among child peers, framed within the physical setting of their classroom and school and the tasks of daily activity in their kindergarten.

Review of Research: Social Competence and the Forms and Functions of Peer Interaction in Classroom Contexts

The research literature on social competence and peer interaction as studied in classroom contexts can be divided into two sets. On the one hand, are correlational and quantitatively coded observational studies that have hypothesized constructs and components within the larger construct of social competence and designed classroom research to measure these elements and the relationships among them. On the other hand, are studies that approach the study of social competence from the premise that classrooms are unique cultures which must be understood as interactive contexts within which children participate in the construction of social reality in an ongoing way. Studies of classrooms as special social contexts take a naturalistic-qualitative approach designed to reveal social competence as it is developed in the natural environments experienced by classroom participants. Because much can be learned from each of these approaches, studies using both quantitative-deductive and qualitative-inductive methods have been included in this review. As individual studies or groups of studies are discussed, methodological perspectives will be identified.

Only research which has examined child-to-child interaction within classrooms has been reviewed. Studies which

focused on adult-to-child interaction or which were conducted in environments other than preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school classrooms have not been included. The review is divided into four areas within this framework: (a) the formation and maintenance of peer groups, (b) factors related to social behavior, (c) the construction of social events, and (d) the structure and functions of peer interaction.

The Formation and Maintenance of Peer Groups

Studies done in preschool settings have explored the assimilation of children into previously established peer groups. Feldbaum, Christenson, and O'Neal (1980) utilized quantitative observational techniques and found that newcomers to a preschool classroom exhibited significantly higher levels of spatial isolation and off-task behaviors than their host classmates. Host classmates engaged in more parallel play, verbalizing to peers, and cooperative play. In addition, female newcomers were observed to be assimilated into interaction activities more slowly than their male counterparts. Corsaro (1981) used participant observation techniques to study how friendship groups are formed and maintained in a preschool setting. He concluded that children are aware of the fragility of peer interaction in classroom play areas. Children in his study learned to minimize disruptions by resisting the access attempts of others. Justifications for excluding peers from interactions were seldom tied directly to the recognition of potential

instability, but were linked to conceptions of friendship and a growing awareness of means for differentiation; for example, "you can't play because you're not our friend, not a policeman, not a girl, etc. -- all variants of 'you're not one of us' at this point in time" (Corsaro, 1981, p. 144). Corsaro suggested that social organization is fragile in these settings and requires participants to constantly order and reorder social events. Through participation in these processes, Corsaro argued, children are developing socio-logical and cultural knowledge related to social positions and the construction, by interactants, of social reality.

Putallaz and Gottman (1981), in a study of the entry behaviors of popular and unpopular second and third grade children, found that unpopular children were more likely to be ignored and less likely to be accepted into previously formed groups than popular children. When attempting to enter groups, unpopular children were found to be more disagreeable and more likely to attempt to call attention to themselves by stating their feelings and opinions, talking about themselves, and asking informational questions than popular children. These strategies more often led to rejection or ignoring behavior than to acceptance into the group.

Garnica (1981) applied qualitative and quantitative (sociometric) methods to study kindergarten child-to-child interactions. She identified "omega children," that is, children who ranked low in the social dominance scale, and compared interactions involving these children with those

of others in the same settings. Garnica found that omega children were ineffective in conversational interactions with other children and that, although they were rarely the object of direct verbal abuse, omega children were frequently found to be virtually ignored and shut out by other children.

Corsaro (1979) utilized Goffman's (1971; 1974) construct "access rituals" in his study of peer interaction in a nursery school. Corsaro used ethnographic techniques to examine ways children gained entry into interactional settings with their peers. He outlined 15 strategies for gaining access from "non-verbal entry--entering into or near area where episode is underway without verbal marking" to "reference to individual characteristics--entering into area where episode is underway and producing verbal reference to individual characteristics of one or more participants" (p. 321). Corsaro suggested that although many of children's access strategies appear to be quite different than those practiced by adults, the strategies used by children reflect their developing awareness of the functions of access rituals as an important element of social competence. Corsaro concluded that his data confirm other findings which suggest that young children "actively develop and use communication skills to produce socially-ordered events in everyday interaction" (1979, p. 335).

Quantitative researchers such as Krasnor (1982) and Renshaw and Asher (1982) have explored child-to-child interaction from a perspective which defines social competence as "an individual's success in achieving personal goals"

(Krasnor, 1982, p. 113). This perspective necessitates drawing distinctions between social goals and interactional strategies. Krasnor studied preschoolers in classroom settings and found that these children varied their goals and their social strategies according to the "target" (boys, girls, teacher, or multiple) of their behavior. She found that among children of similar IQ levels, those who showed more differentiation among selected goals and strategies were more successful in their social problem-solving attempts than those who did not.

Gottman, Gonzo, and Rasmussen (1975) studied the relationship between performance on a measure of social competence and successful peer interaction and friendship formation in classrooms. In this study, "popular" and "unpopular" children differed in their knowledge of how to make friends. In the classroom, popular children distributed and received more positive reinforcement than unpopular children and spent less time daydreaming. A set of related studies (Charlesworth & Hartup, 1967; Hartup & Coates, 1967; Hartup, Glazer, & Charlesworth, 1967) revealed that (a) social acceptance is significantly correlated with giving positive reinforcement, (b) the amount of reinforcement given is positively related to the amount received, and (c) children who had a history of frequent reinforcement from their peers imitated a rewarding model significantly more than a nonrewarding model. Moore (1981) interpreted these findings as evidence that "children themselves selectively

'reward' positive behaviors with friendly responses, thus encouraging the friendly child to behave in a similar manner in the future" (p. 106).

Sociometric measurement has been used in preschool classroom studies to identify variables which correlate with peer acceptance and classroom popularity, i.e., high socio-metric status (Dunnington, 1957; McCandless & Marshall, 1957; Moore, 1964; Moore & Updegraff, 1964). Variables which were found to correlate significantly with sociometric status included behavioral categories identified as "friendly approach" and "associative play" (McCandless & Marshall, 1957). In addition, Moore (1964) found "perceived friendliness" among peers to be correlated with popularity. "Aggression" was found to be negatively correlated with peer acceptance (Dunnington, 1957; Moore, 1964) and popular children scored high on measures of "nurturance-giving" (Moore & Updegraff, 1964). Moore (1967) summarized the findings of research designed to identify correlates with popularity by describing an ideal type based on this body of research.

He presents a picture of easy-going good will, is cooperative with both adults and peers, and is prone to use a preponderance of positive, friendly behavior. He is likely to be an active participant in associative play with his companions and is able to give nurturance, approval, and deference to them as well as elicit these things from them. (pp. 244-245)

In summary, the qualitative and quantitative research on the formation and maintenance of peer groups in classrooms and related research on friendship formation has

made possible typifications of children who are popular with their peers and those who are socially isolated. In addition, the research has provided a sense of the complexity of social behavior among children. Social order in classrooms has been shown to be dynamic and fragile. It must be renegotiated again and again. It has been established that children can and do generate social strategies, but that some children appear to have difficulty acquiring the knowledge and developing the communication skills required for effective movement in and out of peer groups. The research has given reason to believe that children who are popular and who have well developed interactional skills are operating within a self-perpetuating social circle which reinforces their competence and stimulates further growth. In contrast, those children who are outside the circle may not only be without the requisite skills, they may be being denied access to situations in which those skills might be learned and practiced.

Factors Related to Social Behavior

Dore (1978) designed studies with preschool children in an effort to identify some of the social, linguistic, and cognitive factors operating in children's conversations. Dore used a complex coding system to record and analyze "conversation acts" in different settings. He found wide variation in what some children do conversationally on different occasions. He identified three factors which could account for this kind of variation: "the setting,

the task, and the participants" (p. 431). This work offers quantitative evidence to support the reports of qualitative researchers (e.g., Florio, 1978; Wallat & Green, 1979) that the interactions of children are complex in nature and that these interactions are strongly influenced by situational factors.

Other quantitative researchers (Barnes, 1971; Parten, 1932; Reuter & Yunik, 1973; Tremblay, Strain, Hendrickson, & Shores, 1980) have used correlational methods to show relationships among preschool children's interaction in classrooms and other variables such as age, sex, and activity context. Tremblay and her associates (Tremblay et al., 1980) identified several generalizations from these studies.

First, older preschool children tend to engage in more lengthy and more frequent peer contacts than do younger peers. Second, older preschool children display more stable friendships than do younger children. Third, same sex interactions and friendships are much more frequent than opposite sex encounters. Finally, it has been observed that the type and amount of interaction can vary considerably as classroom structure and available play materials are altered across settings. (p. 380)

In addition to correlational studies, the categorical coding of observations has been utilized to study the relationship of "situational competence" to different classroom formats (traditional and open) and to different activity contexts within one classroom (Borman, 1979). Both studies were undertaken in kindergarten classrooms. Borman used coded audio recordings as her data base and t-test statistics

to report her findings. She found, in the first study, that "open classrooms could be portrayed as a sustaining conversational environment in contrast to the traditional setting" (p. 89). That is to say, children in the open program participated in more successful conversations which were more likely to express instructional or interpersonal purpose than their traditional classroom counterparts. In the second study, Borman investigated "situational competence," which she defined as "a summary term descriptive of the full set of linguistic, interpersonal, and social knowledge skills required by the demands of communication in a specific context" (p. 82). She found that situational competence had more opportunities to develop in classroom contexts which included tasks having "clear and apparent focus" and a "limited number of participants" (p. 110). Borman concluded: "It appears, then that particular classroom speech events, to varying degrees, 'allow' a situational competence to be generated in peer interactions" (p. 94).

Bossert's (1979) two year study of task organization and its influence on social relationships in classrooms provided an example of the use of ethnographic methods to study sources of variability in social interaction. Bossert found that in "recitation-organized" classrooms which required students to publicly demonstrate their academic competence, competitive status systems were developed based on this observable competence. In these classrooms, "performance-homogeneous" friendship groups were formed and maintained

throughout the school year. In contrast, classrooms with a "multitask" organizational structure were found not to involve comparative assessments among students. Status based on academic achievements and competitive peer interactions did not develop, and friends and workmates were chosen on the basis of task and hobby interests. These groups changed as tasks and interests shifted.

In summary, the research on sources of variability in children's classroom social behavior has established relationships between social behavior and age, sex, participants, materials, activity contexts, classroom format, and task organization. What seems as important as the findings, is the potential for making a more careful examination of the extent and complexity of these relationships. Borman (1979) and Bossert (1979) have presented different methodological approaches, both of which offer effective ways of exploring the interpersonal behavior of children in classroom contexts.

The Construction of Social Events

An important and relatively new area of research related to social competence and the forms and functions of peer interaction is that research which has focused on classrooms as social systems in which children are active participants in creating social events in concert with their classmates. Ethnographic studies into the cultures of kindergarten and first grade classrooms have provided useful descriptions of how social events are constructed, interpreted, and acted upon by children in classroom settings (Bremme & Erickson,

1977; Mehan, 1979; Wallat & Green, 1979). Mehan (1979) described the social competence required for successful participation in the classroom environment.

Competent membership in the classroom community involves employing interaction skills and abilities in the display of academic knowledge. They must know with whom, when, and where they can speak and act, and they must provide the speech and behavior that are appropriate for a given classroom situation. Students must also be able to relate behavior, both academic and social, to varying classroom situations by interpreting implicit classroom rules. (p. 133)

Bremme and Erickson (1977) identified the elements required of individual children if they are to participate in the "complex and collaborative social and mental work" of creating a classroom social event. Each participant must be able

1. to determine what social situation, or context, is happening now, from moment to moment within the occasion;
2. to interpret the social meaning of others' behaviors in the light of the social situation happening now; and
3. to identify and produce, from among one's "repertoire" of behaviors, those forms considered appropriate alternatives now, in "this" social situation. (pp. 153-154)

This research has served not only to inform teachers and other educational practitioners, but has provided an alternative perspective, an interactive perspective, from which researchers can approach the study of classroom social behavior.

The Structure and Functions of Peer Interactions

What are the forms and functions of child-to-child interactions in classrooms? This question has generated an

interest in classroom social behavior among educators and social scientists from many disciplines. A review of findings in this area follows.

Recent research on how social language develops and is used by young children has challenged some of Piaget's (1959; 1969) findings regarding the functions of children's speech. Rosen and Rosen (1973) conducted a two year study of language learning in British primary schools. One area of focus in their work was child-to-child talk. Their analysis revealed the following elements: (a) children use language to satisfy strong social urges to share feelings and experiences; (b) the questions of children demonstrate their need to attach meaning to experience and interaction; and (c) children's language reveals the ability to reason, to construct arguments in support of observations, and to attach significance to what they see. Rosen and Rosen argued against Piaget's assertion that "conversations among young children remain rudimentary and linked to material action itself. Until seven years of age children scarcely know how to have discussions among themselves" (Piaget, 1969, p. 20). Rosen and Rosen used their conversational transcripts to show that young children listen to each other, put themselves in the place of the other, and exchange ideas in their conversations.

A 1973 study by Garvey and Hogan challenged the assumption of Piaget (1959) and Kohlberg, Yeager, and Hjertholm (1968) that thought and behavior of children are initially

egocentric and become increasingly social with the passage of time as a result of cognitive development and social experience. Garvey and Hogan (1973) found that although young children did engage in egocentric speech in free play situations, the majority of their time was spent in mutual engagement and most of their utterances were mutually responsive, that is, adapted to the speech or nonverbal behavior of their peers. Garvey and Hogan concluded that social behavior does in fact occur in young children and that spontaneous speech "may reflect the emergence of the social understandings that underlie such acts as invitations, requests, insults, and excuses" (p. 567). These authors called for further explorations of what is said and done in early social interaction.

Other researchers have utilized Piaget's (1959) developmental continuum of "self- and self-other" differentiation to construct a hierarchy of "functional-motivational" categories for describing language development in young children (Schachter, Kirshner, Klips, Friedricks, & Sanders, 1974). Schachter and her colleagues observed large numbers of children in 20 urban preschool settings and reported that their cross age data demonstrated the development of children's conversational motives from those personal (expressive, desire implementation, possession rights implementation, and ego-enhancing) to motives which are social in nature (self-referring-including, joining, and collaborative). Schachter et al. (1974) also reported motives which did not

fit their developmental sequence but which were observed throughout the other levels (learning implementation and reporting).

Researchers from the sociolinguistic discipline have contributed to the research on language forms and functions in classrooms. Sociolinguists who study classroom contexts are interested in describing the structural and functional aspects of spontaneous language found therein. Ervin-Tripp (1982), Genishi and DiPaolo (1982), and Wilkinson and Calculator (1982) have conducted sociolinguistic classroom investigations involving child-to-child interaction. Ervin-Tripp (1982) studied the development of children's strategies for getting other people to do what they want. She used analysis of natural conversations, elicitation, and structural interpretation experiments to explore social control acts among young children. She found that by the time children were of school age, they could deploy a whole range of verbal means to express control wishes toward others, including hints or implicit acts. Children did not choose randomly among potential partners but selected those toward whom control acts would be directed based on the possession of a desired resource, familiarity, cooperativeness, submission to coercion, or importance to the child as an affiliate. The choice of form for control acts was found to be determined by nonsocial and social factors, such as the attention or concern of the speaker of the moment, projected contextual factors or probable external obstacles, status

of addressees, emotional tone of the speaker, and activity context. Genishi and DiPaolo (1982) studied the spontaneous speech of preschoolers in an effort to uncover the kinds of arguments children have in natural settings, what their arguments show about their knowledge and learning, and how children's arguments are structured. They concluded, first, that the children studied were argumentative; nine per half hour being the mean number of arguments. Second, the arguments were usually simple in nature; that is, they seldom included compromises or give-and-take solutions. Third, arguments clearly reflected that children had well developed social knowledge about how to behave in school. A socio-linguistic study of similar character was conducted in first grade peer-directed reading groups by Wilkinson and Calculator (1982). The focus of the Wilkinson and Calculator study was on the use of requests for information and action by effective classroom speakers. Their conclusions included the identification of characteristics of requests which are likely to obtain appropriate responses. Requests which worked were on task, in a direct form, sincere, to a designated listener, and revised--if initially unsuccessful.

The forms and functions of peer learning interactions in a kindergarten and second grade class were addressed in a sociolinguistic study conducted by Cooper, Marquis, and Ayers-Lopez (1982). Cooper and her associates explored what roles children assumed in peer learning situations and how the roles were enacted. They identified seven learning

episode types which reflected the roles and functions involved in peer instruction situations. These episodes occurred when children either

- (a) asked for the help of a peer (learner bid); (b) spontaneously offered to help (teacher bid); (c) referred only to the rate of work or attending of others without teaching (pacing); (d) made evaluative statements (evaluative); (e) attempted to join a learning group (joining); (f) attempted to manage others' behavior (behavior management); or (g) participated in cooperative learning by taking turns or pursuing a common goal (collaborative).
(p. 73)

Analysis of patterns of interaction within learning episodes revealed that children have widely varying degrees of social competence in peer learning situations. Some children rarely participate while others "advertise their new insights, offer unsolicited corrections, and coordinate apprenticeships, partnerships, or arguments" (Cooper et al., 1982, p. 79). Comparisons between kindergarten and second grade data revealed differences suggesting developmental changes in older children's ability to reflect on their own understanding and behavior as well as improved knowledge of others. Younger children tended to have more frequent and more transitory contact with others in their class while the second graders tended to be more deliberate in choosing neighbors and formed more long-lasting friendship networks.

Wilkinson and Dollaghan (1979) conducted a naturalistic study of social behavior in three first grade reading classrooms. These researchers focused on "all-student" (non-teacher directed) reading groups and children's requests

for action and for information in this student-to-student context. They found that children consistently engaged in trying and discarding a variety of strategies to meet communicative goals and concluded that children must be viewed as individuals who have their own individualized responses and strategies in communication situations. Based on their findings, Wilkinson and Dollaghan suggested that teachers who provide a variety of contexts and speech situations in which varying rules can be discovered and applied may be helping children increase their communicative effectiveness.

In a 1979 participant observation study, Sieber examined informal peer activity in a New York City elementary school. His sociological analysis of the contexts and types of peer activity revealed that the informal work group behavior of children was consistent with the organizational norms of the classroom. He reported that "relatively little peer activity is directed at subversion of the institution's authority or its goals, and relatively little of it takes the anarchic form that much of the literature leads the observer to expect" (p. 231). In support of this conclusion, Sieber outlined domains of behavior which demonstrate that informal peer group activity furthers the orderly attainment of school goals. These behavioral domains included "clarification of orders, mutual assistance, learning standards of work performance, cooperation in the use of tools and materials, and contributions to classroom social control" (pp. 223-226). Sieber argued that school experiences are directly related

to socializing children for participation in the organizational world of adult work. He viewed peer group interaction around the work of schooling as preparation for similar settings in adult society.

Ross (1983) studied child-to-child interactions during kindergarten block play. She identified six different types of social interactions which she related to social problems that occurred while the children played with blocks: "do me a favor, accidents, gaining access, pay attention to me, gaining acceptance of one's ideas, protecting rights and property, and scarce resources" (pp. 5-8). Ross further described a set of interaction strategies (assertion, co-operation, acceptance, enforcement, and emotional response) which children used to deal with problems across social situations. Ross argued that these interaction strategies are used by children for "negotiating social order" in the block area; that a large part of this negotiation of social order involves negotiating a common definition of each individual, i.e., "identity work" (McDermott & Church, 1976); and that children can truly negotiate the elements of social structure only in interaction with peers.

Hatch (1982) conducted an ethnographic study of peer interaction in a kindergarten classroom. The data from this study revealed that four student-to-student interaction systems were in operation in the studied classroom: (a) a helping system through which students voluntarily helped one another, voluntarily provided help to the group at large,

and provided help upon the request of others; (b) an attention system wherein students sought and dispensed attention among classmates as they worked and played; (c) an evaluation system whereby students sought and received evaluation from their peers; and (d) a self-assertion system which children used to assert and protect their relative status among their peers. Hatch postulated that these interaction systems were constructed by children in response to the influence of two pervasive forces: individual self-esteem drives toward competence, power, and affiliation (Schmuck, 1978); and the classroom social lessons of cooperation, independence, and competition.

In summary, the work of educational researchers, socio-linguists, sociologists, and social anthropologists in the area of classroom social behavior has begun to provide information by which instructional decision making may be improved, and has provided an enriched perspective on the dynamics of peer interaction. Research into the structures and functions of child-to-child interaction has established the social nature of child-to-child classroom talk and described the development of social motivation. It has begun to describe the complexity of social strategy formation, established that there are wide variations among children's abilities to formulate and practice strategies for influencing others, and suggested that the interactive work of children with other children may provide social experiences which are essential to the development of

communicative competence. In addition, research has demonstrated that children quickly acquire well developed knowledge of the social norms and roles of schoolrooms and develop interaction systems and patterns of group behavior which react to and reinforce those norms and role expectations.

The study of social competence and the forms and functions of peer interaction in classrooms has just begun. The initial research efforts reviewed above offer a starting place from which to study classroom social behavior and some alternative theoretical perspectives from which to select. The present study has sought to document and analyze child-to-child social behavior in a kindergarten classroom. The goal of the study was to provide a detailed empirical description of what one set of young social actors do in a particular educational context. The undertaking of such contextualized analytical descriptions offers educators an increasingly enriched view of the forms and functions of child-to-child interaction in classrooms.

Research Perspective and Initial Research Questions

Research Perspective

There is a growing concern with childhood culture and children's peer activities as topics of study in their own right (Lightfoot, 1978). This is a marked change from the major theoretical approaches to human learning and development of the past. These approaches have been built on a conception of socialization as the process by which the child becomes an adult (Corsaro, 1981). As Speier (1973)

observed,

the traditional perspectives have over-emphasized the task of describing the child's developmental process of growing into an adult at the expense of the direct consideration of what the events of everyday life look like in childhood. (p. 141)

The present study was designed to focus on the interactions of children from their perspectives as social participants.

It may be of particular importance to study child-to-child interaction and the role this special kind of social experience plays in the development of interpersonal competence. Wilkinson (1982) argued that previous research on classroom interaction has focused attention on teacher-to-student interaction and neglected student-to-student social interchange. Researchers who have studied the social behavior of young children have pointed out important differences between what is being learned in adult-to-student as opposed to student-to-student interactions (Black, 1979; Ross, 1983). Recognition of those differences gives added legitimacy to the study of face-to-face interactions among children.

This study has taken the point of view that classrooms are complex and dynamic social systems in which children develop and exercise their interpersonal skills. Researchers who have looked closely at how children become competent members of social systems such as classrooms, including Damon (1977), Cairns (1979), and Wallat and Green (1979), have called for studies which "move beyond the past research

emphasis of looking only at primary socializers or at pre-determined social rules as determinants of social action" (Wallat & Green, 1979, p. 284). These social scientists have called for research through which an understanding of how social systems emerge in classrooms and how children develop social skills in multiple situations may be developed. Hartup (1979) summarized:

The school as a social system has not been well described in relation to the growth of social competence in the individual child. Given the extent to which the school is used as a socializing agency, our lack of knowledge concerning its social dynamics is shocking. (p. 946)

Other researchers interested in children's interactions have suggested that experimental and quasi-experimental studies like those traditionally done by social researchers may have limited usefulness in informing educational practice. Mehan (1979) argued that educational research has been preoccupied with the products of the educational process and virtually ignored the direct study of the process itself. He contended that "because educational facts are constituted in interaction, we need to study interaction in educational contexts" (p. 6). Cook-Gumperz (1981), a sociolinguist who has studied child-to-child interaction in school contexts, has agreed with this argument. In her words,

we must study children in occasions where they are not experimental puppets, responding to adult-defined and organized situations, but must see them operating naturally as social beings in the everyday activity of communicating. (p. 49)

Stubbs (1976) went further. As he called for the generation of "basic descriptive information" concerning classroom communication, he asserted that "our ignorance of what actually happens inside classrooms is spectacular" (p. 70). The present research attempted to examine what "actually happens" by studying children's natural classroom social behavior from an interactionist perspective.

It seems redundant to assert that interaction should be studied from an interactionist perspective. Still, it is important to clarify this assertion. The interactionist perspective begins with the assumption that objects, people, situations, and events do not possess their own meaning; meaning is conferred on them (Blumer, 1969; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). This meaning is constructed socially as individuals interact. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) explain:

people in a given situation (for example, students in a particular class) often develop common definitions (or 'share perspectives' in the symbolic interactionist language) since they regularly interact and share experiences, problems, and background; but consensus is not inevitable . . . meaning is always subject to negotiation. (p. 33)

From an interactionist research perspective, the process by which social participants construct and negotiate social reality is the subject matter to be studied. In this study, the students in the kindergarten under investigation were the social participants of interest and the forms and functions of classroom interaction, which they constructed

and continually renegotiated among themselves, the focus of the research.

Initial Research Questions

The research model used in the study prescribes a cycle of asking questions, doing participant observations and other data collection, doing an analysis of that data, and discovering new research questions based on the analysis (Spradley, 1980). This cycle is continued throughout the duration of the study. It runs counter to the "constructive-generative" nature of this approach to enter a research scene with predetermined hypotheses to be tested (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Naturalistic researchers seek to understand the social system under investigation from the perspective of the participants within that system. These scientists enter the social context to be studied with questions which are designed to give tentative form to their initial observations. The broad question which guided this study was: What are the character and nature of student-to-student interaction in this classroom? The formation of initial subquestions within this framing question was influenced by suggestions made by Goetz and Hansen (1974) for studying "the partnerships that occur within the school setting" (p. 7). These subquestions included the following:

1. What are the rules of interaction in student-to-student contexts?
2. How are these rules constructed and how are they enforced?

3. What assumptions do students make about appropriate peer interaction?
4. How do they communicate these assumptions to each other?
5. How do they react when they perceive discrepancies and how are conflicts resolved?

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The research reported here was a naturalistic investigation of kindergarteners' classroom interactions. The goal of the study was to describe and analyze children's face-to-face social behavior in school settings. Symbolic interactionism provided the epistemological base of the methodology and the theoretical core of the analysis presented here. Participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, unobtrusive data collection, and other nonreactive data collection techniques were utilized to gather the data of the study. Data analysis was undertaken as a part of the data collection phase, continued following termination of field data gathering, and extended into the writing phase of the dissertation. This chapter details methodological procedures and is divided into the following sections: participants and setting, research procedures, and methodological issues.

Participants and Setting

Participant Selection

The students in a single kindergarten classroom were the primary subjects of this study. The classroom teacher, the school principal, the classroom aide, volunteer parents, and other adults, including the researcher, who entered the

classroom scene were secondary participants. The social situation of the classroom, rather than individual subjects, was selected as the unit upon which observations would be focused (Becker, 1970).

The decision was made to study one classroom in depth rather than many classrooms superficially. Classroom interaction is immensely complex. Even at the kindergarten level, thousands of meaning-packed interactions take place during the course of a day. Any attempt to analyze these interactions and to find explanatory patterns within them requires that the researcher spend long periods of time in the classroom. Extending the research to more classrooms would have made it impossible, given time constraints, to do more than study interaction at a superficial level.

Since the objective of the study was to understand social behavior from the perspective of "insiders," it was important that participants not feel threatened or imposed upon by the research "outsider" (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). The researcher's experience doing other classroom observational studies led him to expect that if the teacher was a willing participant and felt comfortable having the researcher, to use Wolcott's (1982) phrase, "muddling about" in the classroom, the students would soon forget his presence. In addition, it was recognized that the support of the school principal would be important to the success of the study.

As the study took shape, it was discussed with many principals and teachers. Spindler's (1982) call for studies

of "mainstreamers," as opposed to poor and minority cultural groups, influenced the screening of possible settings. The final selection of a setting was made based on the willingness of the building principal to accept the researcher, the teacher's willingness to conduct her classroom "as if the observer were not there," and the "average" or "mainstream" characteristics of the school. The teacher was recommended by the principal as one who was an excellent kindergarten teacher and who would not be affected by the researcher's presence or his taking of copious notes (Bondy & Hatch, 1982).

The researcher met with the principal several times, with the principal and teacher together, and with the teacher alone to discuss the research process and its intent. These meetings were intended to fulfill ethical obligations that social researchers bear as they enter the world of their subjects. Throughout this study, the researcher kept in mind the Principles of Professional Responsibility adopted by the American Anthropological Association in 1971. These principles remind researchers that they must

- (a) consider informants first;
- (b) safeguard informants' rights, interests, and sensitivities;
- (c) communicate research objectives;
- (d) protect the privacy of informants;
- (e) never exploit informants;
- and (f) make reports available to informants. (Spradley, 1979, pp. 34-39)

During meetings with the teacher and principal, the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the researcher and the participants were clarified. In time, a "research

bargain" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975) was struck between the teacher and the researcher. The teacher agreed to allow the researcher to observe in her classroom and signed a letter of informed consent (Appendix A). The researcher agreed to protect the identities of the children, teacher, school, and school district and to maintain the role of "passive participant observer" (Spradley, 1980) in the classroom setting. It was explained that the researcher would focus on naturally occurring child-to-child interactions. The teacher agreed that she would try to conduct her class as if the researcher were, as the principal put it, "a fly on the wall." The researcher agreed to let the teacher know at the end of each observation period when he next expected to be in the room. He provided the teacher with a description of interviewing expectations and a timeline for completing the observations and interviews. The researcher and teacher designed a strategy for introducing the researcher to the class and a strategy for informing parents of the research project and attaining informed consent from them. The researcher agreed to share with the teacher a summary report and to discuss the findings with her.

The students were not told that they were participating in a study or that the researcher was interested in children's social interactions. They were told that a visitor was coming to the room who wanted to find out "what we do in kindergarten." A meeting was held with parents to explain the procedures, goals, products, and built-in

protections of the study. Through this meeting, and direct individual contacts, informed consent was obtained from each parent (Appendix B).

Setting Description

The study was conducted in a school located in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. The district enrolled approximately 110,000 students during the year of the study (1982-1983) and included 150 schools. The district takes pride in its efforts to provide a strong "basic" education and has been recognized as a national leader among urban districts in developing competency-based instructional systems and curricula.

The school, which will be called Winston Elementary,* was opened in 1951 with 24 rooms in a single story design. Six additional classrooms were added in 1958. The building is located within the "Winston" neighborhood on a three acre, mostly grass-covered campus. The school had an enrollment of approximately 750 during 1982-1983, a number which has remained fairly consistent over the past several years. The Winston neighborhood is well inside the city limits and geographically close to the inner city. Over the past few years, some black families have moved into this traditionally all white area. One apartment-like low income housing project has been built in Winston and another is planned. The neighborhood consists mostly of single family homes which

*The names of all places and people in this report have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants.

were built after World War II. The population of the community and the school is relatively stable. The school reported, as evidence of stability, that 84% of their 1982 fifth graders attended Winston for five or more years.

The district and the school operate busses under a court ordered desegregation plan. Black children are bussed from a virtually all black neighborhood approximately 20 minutes away from Winston School. The black neighborhood is similar in character to Winston, consisting mostly of single family dwellings. There are housing projects in both neighborhoods. During 1982-1983, the racial balance in Winston Elementary was approximately 75% white-25% black. The teaching faculty was about 60% white-40% black. The student black-white ratio has been gradually changing as the bussing of black students remains stable while the number of black families moving into the Winston neighborhood slowly increases.

A Self-Study of Winston Elementary for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools noted that approximately 44% of its students receive free or reduced school lunches and described the income levels of most parents as "moderate to low." The school reported that in most families where two parents are present, both parents work; that the large majority of parents work in unskilled, skilled, and service occupations; that 73% of parents completed high school, 4% received college degrees, and 20% attended but did not complete high school.

The school district and its personnel are very conscious of their students' performance on nationally normed achievement tests as well as state and district produced criterion-referenced exams. Each year, the district compiles and reports test performance data by school. Both the school district and Winston Elementary have improved test scores over the past several years. In 1982, the school district scores averaged slightly higher than national norms and Winston's scores slightly higher than the district's. Winston's scores were in the 51st to 62nd percentile range for reading and math across grades one through five.

There were four kindergarten classes at Winston during the year of the study. All were housed in a wing which was added to the original school structure in 1958. The wing is separated from and is located behind the main building, though the two are connected by a covered walkway. Even though kindergarten attendance was not made mandatory by the state legislature until 1982, Winston has offered kindergarten classes for more than 10 years. Kindergarten children in the district are not included in the bussing order so these children attend elementary schools or kindergarten centers in their home neighborhoods. At the time of the study, the average class size in Winston's kindergartens was 24 children. Four teachers shared the time of three full-time instructional aides. Of the 100 or so children in Winston's kindergarten program, approximately 20 were black and the rest white. Very few children from other minority groups

attend Winston and none were enrolled in kindergarten during the study. The kindergarten day began at 9:00 a.m. and students were dismissed at 1:30 p.m. School for older elementary children ended at 3:15 p.m.

The teacher, Mrs. Shell, is an experienced teacher who, at the time of the study, had been at Winston for more than 20 years. She had taught kindergarten for 6 years. She is white, married, and has three children, the youngest of whom is in high school. It was clear from observing her interactions with others and from informal interviews that Mrs. Shell was liked and respected by the teachers and staff at Winston. Among the teachers, she had several friends with whom she maintained close personal relationships outside of school. When asked why she had chosen to spend the last 25 years with first graders and kindergarteners, she replied,

I have just always preferred the smaller ones. When I started I thought, "I want to start them out so I don't have to correct any other teacher's mistakes." That was my thinking.

Other adults who were part of the classroom setting included a white, female, 25-30 year old aide; a white, female, 40-50 year old principal; and several volunteers who were, with one exception, young, white, female parents. The exception was a young, black, female parent. The researcher is a 35 year old, white male. The involvement of these adults in the social interaction of children will be detailed, as appropriate, in the findings of the study.

Some general demographic data regarding the children in the study follow. As stated above, all of the children in Mrs. Shell's class lived in the Winston neighborhood. All were brought to school by parents or older siblings. Class enrollment during the study was stable except for the withdrawal of one child, the temporary entry and subsequent withdrawal of another, and the entry of a third near the end of the observational period. Except for a few days, the enrollment was 24: 13 white females; 1 black female; 8 white males, and 2 black males. A table of (fictitious) names by sex, race, and group assignment is included in Appendix C. As required by state law, all children in the class were at least 5 years old as of September 1, 1982. Only two children, both of whom had been retained, were 6 years old as of September 1, 1982. Of the 24 children, 11 had applied for and were receiving free or reduced price school lunches. Fifteen children were living with both parents, six with their mothers alone, and three with a mother and a stepfather. Most children had at least one brother or sister, while the average number of siblings was just over two.

No standardized test data on achievement or intelligence were available on the children of the study. Their teacher often characterized the class as being full of average children. When asked to compare this class with other kindergarten classes she had taught, Mrs. Shell responded,

Academically, this is about the most average class. I don't mean average like the "bell system" where you have a small top group, a big middle group, and a little bottom group; the majority of mine were average students. Just a few maybe a little above average, but I had only, I'd say, two excellent students in the class. I had fewer in the bottom group in my class than any class since I have been teaching kindergarten.

Occupational data on parents showed that, although two identified themselves as supervisors, the large majority of the men worked in skilled or semi-skilled jobs such as truck drivers, shipyard workers, carpenter's helpers, or navy seamen. Ten of the women among the parents reported that they were housewives while the majority worked outside the home as clerks, cooks, and waitresses. Two women were nurses. Of the 39 parents on whom educational data were available, 31 reported that they had graduated from high school and of these two had graduated from college. Of those who did not complete high school, all but one had completed at least the eighth grade.

The research classroom was a well-equipped primary room with sufficient space, facilities, and materials for the kindergarten program. The curriculum provided by the district and implemented by Mrs. Shell was organized using a thematic approach. For example, during the month of January, woodland animals, winter, energy, and Martin Luther King were the themes around which the children's learning activities were organized. Within themes, specific readiness skills were stressed each month. January's skills

included, among others, copying first name, combining objects, copying shapes and patterns, recognizing lower case letters, and comparing size, quantity, and volume.

Mrs. Shell, as suggested by the district curriculum, divided her day into small group activities before lunch and large group activities after lunch. Children were divided into four ability groups which rotated through four learning centers each morning. In the afternoon, Mrs. Shell read stories, presented social studies and science lessons, showed filmstrips and films, and directed physical education, music, art, and language development activities.

This broad description of the research setting and its actors provides the beginnings of a contextualized perspective on the study. More specific descriptions of classroom settings will be included as findings are reported.

Research Procedures

Data Collection

Uncovering the socially constructed meanings which children use in their classroom interactions is a difficult process, requiring special data gathering techniques and analytic methods. The investigation of meanings and understandings held by children requires the collection of data that capture their perspectives. As Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) have written,

We want to know what the actors know, see what they see, understand what they understand. As a result, our data attempt to describe their vocabularies, ways of looking, their sense of the important and unimportant, and so on. (p. 7)

The data for this study included field note transcriptions of hundreds of "interaction events" (Mehan, 1982), records of formal and informal interviews with classroom participants, and various unobtrusively obtained data which helped reveal participant perspectives. In the following subsections, the three data collection strategies used in this study will be described: participant observation, interviewing, and unobtrusive data collection.

Participant observation

The term participant observation is most often associated with the field work of cultural anthropologists. Field anthropologists, or ethnographers as they are commonly called, historically have studied exotic or primitive cultural groups while living within the groups for extended periods of time. The goal of ethnographic research is to understand the culture being studied from the perspective of the participants. Anthropologist-ethnographers participate as members of the culture to some degree and keep carefully written records or field notes. Field notes, interviews, and artifact collections are the data of ethnography and the subject of anthropological interpretation (Fried, 1972; Pelto, 1970; Wolcott, 1976).

Anthropologists are not the only researchers who use participant observation strategies. These techniques have been used successfully by sociologists, educational researchers, and other social scientists who study the social construction of meaning. The rationale for using participant

observation is the same across disciplines. Participant observation provides a methodological avenue into the social knowledge and processes by which participants in a social setting negotiate meaning. In their efforts to "reconstruct the reality" of social interactants, participant observers attempt to enter the perceptions of those they study, to acquire "member's knowledge and consequently understand from the participant's point of view what motivated the participants to do what the researcher has observed them doing and what these acts meant to them at the time" (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979, p. 8).

Participant observation techniques used in this study followed Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS). The DRS is a cyclic process of asking questions, collecting data, recording the data, analyzing the data, and asking more questions based on that analysis. At this point, the cycle begins again and continues until the analysis of data is finally complete. The researcher begins the observation-analysis cycle by making broad descriptive observations in an effort to capture the general contexts of the research scene and soon after begins to analyze the data for patterns and relationships. The researcher uses information gathered in early analysis to identify questions to be taken to the research scene which will focus on-going observations. The cycle of observation, analysis, and more focused observation continues throughout the data collection phase. Analysis continues after the researcher leaves the

field and until the report of findings is written. The analysis process will be discussed in more detail later.

Spradley's (1980) DRS was a useful guide during the participant observation component of this study. The researcher entered the setting with a broad interest in the nature of child-to-child interaction, made initial observations and analyses which led to a focus on questions regarding particular classroom contexts, and continued to observe and record behavior. It was the researcher's practice to have a file card attached to his clipboard on each observation day. On the card were questions intended to guide that day's observations.

Within the research technique known as participant observation, there are a variety of gradations based on the relationship between the degree of participation as opposed to the degree of observation. Denzin (1978) categorized these gradations on a continuum from complete participant to complete observer. Spradley used the "degree of involvement" to distinguish five types of participation: complete, active, moderate, passive, and nonparticipation (1980, p. 58). The researcher's role in this study was that of a passive participant observer. As Spradley (1980) described passive participation, the researcher "is present at the scene of the action but does not participate or interact with the other people to any great extent" (p. 59). The study was focused on interaction constructed by children in the classroom. Interaction between adults and children was only of

secondary interest in the study. The research intent was to capture the forms and functions of child-to-child interaction in naturally occurring classroom situations. Therefore, a conscious effort was made to limit involvement with the children in order to reduce the effect of the researcher's presence in the room.

The researcher entered the setting as participant observer after the children returned from Christmas holidays in January, 1983, and continued a cycle of observations through the last day of May in the same year. Over the five month observation period, 26 classroom visits were made. Observations ranged from 1½ to 5 hours in duration and were evenly divided among the days of the school week. A total of 80 hours of classroom activity was recorded in 345 single-spaced pages of field notes. Observations were scheduled so that social behavior during all parts of the kindergarten day could be observed. The researcher accompanied the class to lunch, to the playground, to the library, to programs in the auditorium, and to activities with other classes. The teacher and researcher agreed as part of their initial bargain that the observation schedule of the researcher should not influence the activities planned for children, nor the inverse. The goal was to capture as nearly as possible the contexts of kindergarten activity as they naturally occurred in everyday classroom events. Midway through the cycle, the researcher made the decision to focus the majority of his remaining observational time

on child-to-child interactions in a particular context within the classroom. Data analysis led the researcher to an interest in peer behavior at "table 2" which was the independent activity center during each morning's small group activity time. Each of the four student groups rotated through table 2 daily. At this center, children worked on assignments designed by the teacher. Their interactions in this setting developed without the influence of direct adult supervision. Because of the abundance of child-to-child interactions in this setting, the majority of time during the second half of the data collection phase was spent observing table 2. Since this center was in operation only during the morning, overall data are necessarily unbalanced, with morning activity contexts receiving more attention than those scheduled for afternoons.

Participant interviewing

Participant interviewing is a research technique often associated with naturalistic studies (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1978; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). By interviewing the participants, an extra dimension can be added to participant observation data.

Both "formal" and "informal" (Spradley, 1980) interview techniques were used in this study. Formal interviews, interviews which occurred at appointed times, were conducted with the classroom teacher. Informal interviews, where adults working in the classroom were asked questions, were conducted throughout the observational cycle. All informal

interviews were conducted while interviewees were away from their duties with children. Both formal and informal interviews took a form which Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) have called "unstructured." In unstructured interviews, the interview situation is taken to be a dynamic interpersonal social event in its own right. The interviewer may enter the interview situation with certain questions in mind, but remains sensitive to questions that emerge from the interview interaction, the social context being considered, and the degree of rapport which has been established. Relevant questions develop from the interviewer's growing awareness of participant's perspectives. Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) summarized: "In short, appropriate or relevant questions emerge from the process of interaction that occurs between the interviewer and interviewees" (p. 40).

Informal interview notes were maintained from the very first contacts with individuals responsible for granting permission to do the study, continued throughout the observation process, and until the final visit to the school one week after the end of observations. The principal and teacher were told in the beginning that "everything is data" and that conversations with them and with others in and around the classroom scene would be recorded as interview data. It was the researcher's practice to always have his clipboard and notes with him while in the school. However, he did not try to write down conversations among adults to which he was privy or in which he was involved while they

were occurring. His usual practice was to make a few notes during interactions, then fill them in at the first opportunity. The researcher and teacher agreed that they would not interact with each other while students were present. This was a strategy designed to improve the researcher's invisibility in the class and one which worked well. However, this strategy did limit the data that could be collected by informal interviews with the teacher. She agreed to be interviewed at the end of the participation observation period and spent three hours, in two sittings, completing a taped interview with the researcher.

The children in the study were not interviewed because the researcher explicitly sought to avoid direct interaction with students. It was assumed that if students developed relationships with the researcher or knew what about their behavior he found interesting, their classroom interactions might be affected. In addition, as Corsaro (1981), MacKay (1973), and Mehan (1979) have discussed, children are difficult subjects for naturalistic studies, and for participant interviewing in particular. Many five- and six-year-old children are unable to bring to participant interviewing the self-conscious interpretation which this research strategy seeks to tap. Videotape equipment has been successfully used to stimulate effective interviewing of children (Mehan, 1979; Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Florio, 1978). Such strategies were, however, beyond the scope and feasibility of this study.

Unobtrusive data collection

Unobtrusive data are the products of "any measure of observation that directly removes the observer from the set of interactions or events being studied" (Denzin, 1978, p. 256). Unobtrusive data collection is the gathering of "indicators" such as official documents, children's school work, or any nonreactive measures of group or individual life (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Wolcott, 1976). The great advantage of this type of data collection is that it does not influence the social setting under investigation.

Unobtrusive data were collected by the researcher from his first contacts with the school district through the last day at the research site. Some of these data included the following: school and district reports concerning demographics, test results, and socioeconomic status; official documents such as procedural manuals, pupil progression plans, annual reports to parents, and accreditation self-studies; student cumulative records; student produced artifacts such as school work, art, or found items; teacher produced artifacts such as activity samples, plans, and play and work materials provided to children; representational maps; and samples or descriptions of objects and materials such as commercially produced curriculum materials and classroom equipment supplied by the school. These data provided insight into participant histories and influences on the setting under investigation and helped establish contextual reference points. Unobtrusive data also provided an additional source of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

Analysis

There is an artificiality which can distort the "whole" of the research process when data collection, analysis, interpretation, and theoretical influences are discussed as separate and distinct elements. In fact, when these "pieces" of the naturalistic research act are applied, they always overlap and are often indistinguishable. Data collection always includes an interpretive element (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955) and is influenced by the researcher's theoretical assumptions (Berger & Kellner, 1981). Within the model used in this study, analysis and participant observation are accomplished not in distinct linear stages but in an ongoing cycle. Analysis is systematic interpretation and at some level must be reconciled with the theoretical work which defines the area under investigation (Berger & Kellner, 1981; Kuhn, 1970; Spindler, 1982). Recognizing the limitations mentioned, this analysis section is divided into the following parts: procedures, interpretation, and the role of theory.

Analytic procedures

The Spradley (1980) DRS model was selected to guide the data collection and analysis procedures of this study. Spradley divided the data analysis sequence into 12 steps. The intent of the analysis was to search the data for the social patterns through which the children of the study made sense of their interaction with peers. Selective application of the levels of analysis suggested by the Spradley model made the accomplishment of this goal more feasible.

As Spradley (1980) explained, "analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systemic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among its parts, and their relationship to the whole" (p. 85). The DRS provides a structure for the systematic examination of social behavior recorded in field notes. Spradley identified several levels of analytic inquiry, including domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and searching for cultural themes. Each of these levels of analysis was applied in this study and will be described below.

1. Domain analysis is a search for categories of meaning which exist in the cultural scene. These meaning systems are embedded in the tacit understandings of participants. To bring them to the surface, the researcher systematically asks questions of the field note data. These questions help the researcher discover patterns and relationships in the scene under investigation. Such questions include the following: Are there kinds of things here? Are there ways to do things? Parts of things? Reasons for things? Uses for things? Steps in doing things? (Spradley, 1980). In this study, domain analysis was begun after two observational sessions and continued throughout the duration of the study.

2. Taxonomic analysis is a search for the ways in which domains are organized and related to one another. Questions formed for this type of analysis are comparison kinds of questions which get at similarities and differences

within and among domains. The product of this analysis is a diagrammatic representation of the cultural scene being investigated. Taxonomic analysis is always tentative and continues as more data are collected in the field. In this study, a taxonomy of peer interaction was generated after data gathering had been completed and many domains had been discovered.

3. "Componential analysis is the systematic search for the attributes (components of meaning) associated with cultural categories" (Spradley, 1980, p. 131). This level of analysis involves an eight step process for searching for contrasts, and entering all this information onto a paradigm. Componential analysis was applied, in the present study, to those domains that emerged as central to the goals of the research.

4. Searching for cultural themes is a level of analysis which seeks to tie findings from the analyses already completed to domains which apply across social groups, that is, to "cultural themes" (Opler, 1945). Themes may be conceptualized as unifying domains which tie the parts of the scene together and make sense of it in relationship to broader social contexts. In this study, children's social goals became the unifying domains which organized the conceptualization of the findings.

In summary, Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence guided the analytic procedures of the study. Analysis was begun early in the observation cycle and continued through the writing of the findings chapter.

Analytic interpretation

Tied to the processes of analysis are those of interpretation. The interpretation of observed social phenomena is a defining characteristic of naturalistic inquiry. The goals of this type of research always involve getting at inner perspectives and understandings of social actors (Rist, 1977). The process of gaining insight into the meaning structures of others involves careful observation, description, interpretation, and analysis.

Interpretation always involves making inferences. Participants learn the social norms, rules, and assumptions necessary for participation in particular situations by making inferences. These individuals and their social partners use three types of information to make cultural inferences: (a) they observe what people do, (b) they observe things people make and use, and (c) they listen to what people say (Spradley, 1980). Naturalistic scientists use the same information and employ the same processes of inference "to go beyond what is seen and heard to find out what people know" (Spradley, 1980, p. 10).

In this study, interpreting participant behavior was especially difficult because children's social perspectives are so different from those of adults (Denzin, 1977; Lightfoot, 1978; Speier, 1973). In order to monitor the inference processes involved in analyzing children's interactions, principles of "analytic induction" were applied (Denzin, 1978; Lindesmith, 1952; Robinson, 1951). This

analysis strategy guided the researcher to form rough initial definitions and to modify or discard hypotheses as dissonant cases were examined. The application of analytic induction procedures provided a means whereby the researcher was constantly led back into the empirical world recorded in his data in a systematic search for negative evidence (Becker, 1961; Blumer, 1969; Lindesmith, 1952).

The role of theory

Denzin (1978) and others (Becker, 1970; Blumer, 1969; Garfinkel, 1967) have pointed out the importance of uniting the theoretical perspective of the researcher with the research methodologies employed. Denzin argued that there are unfortunate consequences when theory, methodology, and substantive research interests are fragmented. In his words,

Research methods are of little use until they are seen in the light of theoretical perspectives. Substantive speciality is of little use or interest until it is firmly embedded within a theoretical framework and grounded upon sound research strategies. (1978, pp. 3-4).

Denzin's suggestion that the research act be a logical extension of the social scientist's theoretical assumptions guided the development of this study. Symbolic interactionism provided the theoretical core around which the study was constructed (Blumer, 1969). The researcher was interested in describing and analyzing child-to-child interaction as it naturally occurred in a kindergarten classroom. Naturalistic inquiry based on symbolic interactionist principles

provided the research approach whereby the reality of social interchange within school settings could be reconstructed.

Beyond epistemological and methodological influences, theory also influenced the substantive findings of this research. This study falls on the inductive side of the inductive-deductive research continuum (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). That is, it began with the collection of data and moved toward the construction of theoretical categories. This inductive approach, however, does not insulate the study from the influence of theoretical work of which the researcher had knowledge. Nor should it. As Fried (1972) insisted, "There is no such thing as a theoretically unbiased work" (p. 111). The researcher made every effort to constantly remind himself of his role as researcher and, as a function of that role, take his theoretical knowledge into account as he processed and analyzed data (Berger & Kellner, 1981; Goetz & Hansen, 1974).

In this study, the review of research reported in Chapter I was conducted prior to data analysis. This review influenced the generation of research questions and helped define the parameters of the study. However, data analysis led the researcher to search for other related studies and theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Existing theory and research have been utilized (a) to provide a basis on which readers, social scientists, and educators in particular, may assess the study's findings (Wolcott, 1977; 1982); (b) to improve explanatory power by bringing "new

to-be-interpreted phenomena into a meaningful relation with comparable phenomena previously interpreted by other(s)" (Berger & Kellner, 1981, p. 49); (c) to provide an additional source of triangulation as findings are analyzed from alternative theoretical schemes (Denzin, 1978); and (d) to contribute to the development of knowledge by pointing out corroboration and contradictions with other findings (Wilson, 1977).

Methodological Issues

Naturalistic researchers have a responsibility to address certain methodological issues as they report their findings (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Ross & Kyle, 1982). Such issues include revealing researcher background and qualifications, controlling possible sources of bias, and dealing with potential effects of participant-researcher relationships.

Researcher Qualifications and Biases

In keeping with what Schwartz and Jacobs (1979, p. 58) have called "the method of true confessions," this section will include a necessarily self-conscious revelation of the background, preparation, experience, and qualifications of the researcher. Areas of potential bias and procedures for their control will be discussed. The goal here is not, as Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) somewhat sarcastically put it, to absolve the researcher of his methodological sins in advance, but to demonstrate an awareness of possible sources which may distort descriptions or confound interpretations,

and to provide the reader with a basis for evaluating the study as it unfolds (Ross, 1978; Wolcott, 1976).

Wolcott (1976) provided a discussion of essential qualifications of "ethnographers" which apply equally well to naturalistic researchers. Wolcott called for a thorough grounding within the perspective and terminology of the researcher's discipline and such other "less tangible" skills as those of sensitive and perceptive observation, personal stability and flexibility, and the skills of the storyteller and writer (1976, p. 28). Wilson (1977, pp. 261-262) provided a list of questions to be considered as qualitative researchers evaluate each other's work. Wilson's questions, which address Wolcott's qualification criteria, have been adopted to organize the following discussion.

What is the background and training of the researcher?

The researcher has worked in public education for 11 years. He has been a classroom teacher in grades one through four, has worked as a school-based K-3 specialist, and has supervised the implementation of a district K-3 program. He holds B.S. and M.Ed. degrees in elementary education, teaching certification in early childhood and elementary education, and has completed coursework for a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction. The coursework for the Ph.D. has included studies of sociological theory, the sociology of education, qualitative research methods, classroom ethnography, learning theory, educational evaluation, and theory and research in curriculum and instruction.

As Wolcott (1976) called for extensive reading within the researcher's discipline, it is pointed out that the present researcher has read extensively from the work of researchers using related methodological approaches. Special interest has been focused on areas such as the anthropology of education, educational sociology, sociolinguistic studies of education, and the sociology of face-to-face interaction. In addition, the researcher has made investigations and written papers concerning the applications of qualitative methods to educational evaluation (Hatch, 1983) and to classroom studies (Bondy & Hatch, 1982).

What are the researcher's previous experiences doing this type of research?

The researcher has done two studies of the naturalistic variety prior to the present research. One study (Hatch, 1982) was conducted in a kindergarten classroom using ethnographic participant observation techniques, interviewing, and anthropological analysis. The structure of child-to-child interaction emerged as the focus of this first study and that focus has influenced the design and perspective of this dissertation study. A second naturalistic study was undertaken with a colleague (Hatch & Bondy, 1983). This study used participant observation and ethnographic interview techniques to study the nature of reading instruction in a summer reading program.

What are the theoretical orientations of the researcher?

The researcher approaches the study of children's social behavior from an interactionist perspective. An

interactionist sees social reality as the dynamic construction of actors in a particular context. The goal of this study was to explore how young children in school work together to construct social meaning and develop the understanding necessary for competent social participation. The researcher accepts the view that the socialization of children is an interactive process rather than a one-way transmission of the adult culture to the young (Dreitzel, 1973). On the relationship of the school and culture as they are tied in the socialization process, the researcher agrees with Spindler (1982) and other social scientists (e.g., Henry, 1963; Parsons, 1959) who identified cultural transmission as the ultimate function of schooling. The researcher believes that schools reflect and effectively duplicate the cultural mainstream, that in Spindler's words, "The school transmits what is, not what should be" (1982, p. 492). This view of schooling and socialization, an interactive view of socialization processes, and an interactionist perspective on the construction of social reality are the theoretical orientations of the researcher related to this study.

What are the researcher's personal feelings about the topic being discussed?

The researcher's feelings concerning children's interactions in school have remained detached in the sense that he did not enter the classroom social scene with an hypothesis to prove or a notion of himself as sociological muck-raker looking for some piece of hidden curriculum to debunk. The researcher's attitude has been that children's social

behavior in school has been too often ignored by teachers, educationists, and social researchers. This study is seen as a small counter to that historic neglect, and as a personally stimulating adventure into an important area of inquiry, the starting place, perhaps, for a professional lifework.

How does the researcher control the effect of his personal and professional biases?

This final question was not found among those listed by Wilson (1977), but addresses his concern for the "researcher's ability to move beyond his own perspectives" (p. 261). The researcher of the present study begins to control his feelings and theoretical preferences by accepting them as potential sources of bias. He does not expect to enter the research scene tabula rasa but must find ways to bring his biases to the surface and account for them in his decision making, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Having theoretical convictions is not inherently a source of contamination in naturalistic studies. Malinowski made an important distinction between "preconceived ideas" and "foreshadowed problems" that speaks to the benefits of having theoretical foundations.

Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with "preconceived ideas." If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the

habit of molding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of the scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies. (Malinowski, 1922, pp. 8-9).

Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) described an interesting benefit researchers can derive from monitoring their own feelings in participant observation settings. They suggested that when the feelings of the researcher become stimulated, the stimulation can serve as a signal that something important is going on in the social scene. This cues an observer to be extra careful in making a clear description of what is occurring and to redouble his efforts to monitor himself so that his notes are descriptive rather than evaluative. This device was used several times during the classroom observations of this study.

Sociologists and field anthropologists have described the way they manage the influence of their own knowledge and points of view as keeping a "sociological perspective" (Berger & Kellner, 1981) or as "bracketing" their impressions (Wilson, 1977). Taking a sociological perspective, for this researcher, meant constantly reminding himself of his role as researcher and making every effort to frame all observations and analyses from the special technical and ethical perspective of that role. The researcher in this study made a conscious effort during observations to suspend judgement and evaluation, i.e., bracket preconceived notions of

how peer interaction in classroom settings might be structured. Finally, the researcher has followed the suggestion of educational researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Ross, 1978) who contend that it is the responsibility of the researcher to "constantly confront his or her own opinions and prejudices with the data" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 42). In any descriptive-analytic study, the data must carry the weight of the description and be the substance of the analysis. The final check on any possible researcher bias must be to clearly identify potential sources of bias, explore possible meanings and ramifications this bias might engender, and then carefully review findings in the light of potential biases to be certain that the data on which those findings have been based are sound and sufficient.

Participant-Researcher Relationships

Classroom researchers and the participants in their studies develop relationships which can affect the direction and results of naturalistic studies. On the one hand, researchers can become so involved in the classroom scene that the social knowledge which they are there to uncover becomes taken for granted by them in the same way that it is by classroom participants. On the other hand, participant behavior in the classroom may be affected by the presence of the researcher. Both issues were addressed as data were collected and analyzed.

As naturalistic researchers attempt to understand classroom life from the perspective of their subjects, they do

not want to become so involved that the cultural knowledge they are learning becomes second nature or reaches the level of tacit understanding with them. As Berger and Kellner (1981, p. 34) explained, for the social scientist "familiarity breeds inattention." The extreme form of researcher involvement with subjects is known as "going native." In the present study, the role of participant observer was passive in nature making direct involvement with children very limited. Following the advice of Denzin (1978) and Johnson (1975), however, the researcher utilized bracketing techniques in his field notes and maintained a research journal in an effort to monitor changes in his perspective as he collected participant observation data.

The dilemma of trying to capture naturally occurring behavior in the unnatural context created by the presence of a researcher has been termed by Labov (1972) the "observer's paradox." It was the researcher's belief, based on hundreds of hours of classroom observation (doing research, supervising teachers, and gathering data for exceptional student evaluations) that if the observer consistently avoids all contact with children they soon forget his presence. This means that eye contact with children is always avoided, that comments about the researcher are never reacted to, that plays for attention are always ignored, and that requests for assistance (Rist, 1975) are never honored. This strategy of avoiding involvement was utilized consistently, though sometimes painfully, throughout the observations of the study.

The researcher recognizes that, even though careful plans were made to control the involvement of himself with classroom participants, observations, analysis, and reported findings must take the researcher's presence into account. The study must be viewed and reported as research into a "setting with a researcher present" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 43). As the researcher conducted observations, he monitored his apparent effects on classroom interactions and recorded these effects as a bracketed part of his field notes.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS: THE SOCIAL GOALS OF CHILDREN IN CHILD-TO-CHILD INTERACTIONS

The question which guided the design, data collection, and initial analytic phases of this study was: What are the character and nature of student-to-student interaction in the classroom being studied? As data analysis proceeded, a more focused question emerged. What are the social goals of children in child-to-child interactions? This question guided the completion of the analysis and became the central question which these findings seek to answer.

To provide a framework for understanding the findings reported here, it is important to draw distinctions among kinds of goals. Individuals engage in face-to-face interaction communicate information on a variety of levels. Goffman (1967) made a distinction between two such levels: substantive and ceremonial. At the substantive level, the content of the communication has observable value in its own right. The substance or topic of communication has utility for participants in the interaction. An example of substantive communication among kindergarten children in the study was the frequent sharing of information about class-work. The substance of talk about work had value in its own right for the children. Such communication gave them

information which contributed to their success in completing their assigned tasks.

Goffman (1967) defined ceremonial communicative activity as a "conventionalized means of communication by which the individual expresses his character and conveys his appreciation of the other participants in the situation" (p. 54). At this level of communication, individuals orchestrate their behavior in such a way as to influence others to form a favorable impression of them. An example of ceremonial communication among studied children was their constant use of behaviors which projected and protected their images as competent students. A detailed description of these and other forms of ceremonial communication will be presented later.

Ceremonial communication is the medium through which individuals establish and maintain social relationships. While kindergarten children participated in substantive communication regarding classwork, they were also communicating social information (e.g., that they were competent students) through their ceremonial behavior. The goals of children's substantive communications were on the surface of their interactions and therefore easy to identify. The goals of their ceremonial communications, here called social goals, were much more difficult to uncover.

As Goffman (1967) pointed out, some activity can be ceremonial without having a substantive component, but all substantive activity will carry ceremonial meaning, provided it is performed in the presence of others. On the surface,

young children's interactions often seem fragmented, incomplete, and without substance. Ervin-Tripp (1982) and Genishi and DiPaolo (1982) have observed that often it is difficult to understand children's interaction goals. The difficulty may be related to Goffman's principle. Some interactions among children may be purely ceremonial in nature, in which case a search for substantive goals would be futile. In addition, failure to recognize that the accomplishment of social goals is an attendant feature of all substantive interactions can distort interpretations of child-to-child interactions.

Failing to take the unique perspectives of children into account can be another impediment to understanding the complexity of their social behavior. The goal of this research has been to understand children's interactive behavior from the perspective of the children themselves. When social goals are described in these findings, they will be described as children's social goals. Children's social goals are the objectives which children in the study sought to accomplish in their face-to-face ceremonial activities.

Analysis of children's interactions revealed the following social goals which have been divided into three basic areas:

1. Affiliation goals--to feel that they are connected with others, that others perceive them as worthy social interactants, and that others care about them and want to do things with them.

2. Competence goals--to feel that they are competent individuals, capable of accomplishing school tasks, and that they are recognized as members of the group which is achieving what is expected in school.

3. Status goals--to feel that they are superior to or more important than others, that they are able to manipulate or control the actions of others, and that they are able to assert their own status in relationship to the status of others.

Findings related to each goal area will be described in detail making reference to primary data from the study, that is, the interactions of children in the contexts of their kindergarten. Prior to these descriptions, basic assumptions will be presented, the relationship of adult interaction norms and rules to children's interactions will be discussed, and the criteria for identifying social goals will be identified.

Two assumptions about human interaction are at the center of this study of children's social goals. The first is that when individuals are being observed by others and are aware of the observation, their behavior always takes into account an estimation of how that behavior will be interpreted by those doing the observing (Goffman, 1959; 1969). Individuals work to create and maintain favorable images of themselves in the eyes of others. When individuals have projected impressions of themselves to others, the others expect these impressions to be maintained. Each new

interaction provides an opportunity for images to be maintained or necessitates that they be redefined.

The second assumption follows from the first. Feelings of affiliation, competence, and status are the products of an individual's estimations of the effectiveness of his or her impression management attempts. To some degree these feelings are subject to redefinition in each new social interchange. Children develop their notions of their own abilities as affiliates, as competent individuals, and as status holders through their social interactions with others. These notions are not fixed permanently but are held tentatively and modified by every event in which such qualities are displayed, observed, and reacted to by others.

Adults participate in the definition and redefinition of impressions using patterns of interaction governed by norms and rules which are internalized by every competent communicator (Goffman, 1967; 1981). Goffman (1967) described "interaction rituals" used by individuals to participate effectively in social situations. He explained:

whenever the physical possibility of spoken interaction arises, it seems that a system of practices, conventions, and procedural rules comes into play which functions as means of guiding and organizing the flow of messages. An understanding will prevail as to when and where it will be permissible to initiate talk, among whom, and by means of what topics of conversation. A set of significant gestures is employed to initiate a spate of communication and as a means for the persons concerned to accredit each other as legitimate participants. (pp. 33-34)

Researchers who have studied child-to-child interactions have noted that children's knowledge of the "practices, conventions, and procedural rules" which govern adult interaction may be incomplete (Wilkinson & Calculator, 1982; Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1979). Goffman (1963) has referred to children as "communication delinquents," because they frequently violate adult rules. The findings of this study confirm assertions that young children's knowledge of interaction norms and rules is incomplete. Nevertheless, as in other studies (e.g., Genishi & DiPaolo, 1982), children in the study demonstrated a sophisticated repertoire of social skills. As the ways children sought to accomplish their social goals are described, their knowledge of the norms and rules of adult interaction will become evident and be discussed.

The findings reported here are the product of the analysis of hundreds of child-to-child interaction events recorded during 80 hours of classroom observation. Understanding children's interactions from their own perspectives required the researcher to bracket adult perceptions and expectations about face-to-face interactions. "What's going on here from the perspective of the participants?" was the question which framed the analytic perspective of the study. Data analysis within this perspective was based on the assumption that children, like all interactants, were constructing meaning through their interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). The goal of analysis was

to understand the meanings through which children made sense of their interactions with peers.

As interaction events were analyzed, the question of children's goals became important. Children's social goals were identified through analytic processes applied around the following questions. What do children gain from observed behaviors? When frustration is observed, what are the sources of frustration? What do children do in interactions to relieve frustration? When satisfaction is derived from interpersonal contacts, what are the sources of satisfaction? What do children do in interactions to achieve satisfaction?

Data analysis growing from these questions revealed that the major social goals of children in the study were to feel affiliated with peers, to feel competent in classroom contexts, and to feel able to assert their status in relation to peers. For conceptual clarity, each goal area will be described separately. It should be noted that such discrete divisions were not found in children's social behavior. Most often, their interactions were motivated by a complex mixture of social and substantive goals. Within each goal area, sets of strategies for accomplishing social motives in that area have been described. Strategies for accomplishing affiliation goals are organized into the following domains: ways to make contact, ways to check on standings with peers, and ways to express feelings of affection and belonging. Strategies for accomplishing competence goals include ways to request evaluation and ways to respond

to evaluation. Status goal strategy domains are ways to practice self-promotion, ways to respond to self-promotions, ways to put others down, and ways to respond to put-downs. Specific patterns of behavior within strategy domains will be described using examples from classroom data. The complexity of children's interactions will be evident in these examples.

Affiliation Goals

Children in the study used child-to-child interactions to accomplish goals related to feeling affiliated with their peers. Analysis of children's interactions revealed objectives such as feeling connected with others, believing that they are seen by others as desirable interaction partners, and feeling that others care about them and want to participate in activities with them. These goals motivated much of the social behavior children exhibited in a wide variety of activity contexts.

Studying the forces that motivated what appeared to be purely ceremonial social behavior among children provided an avenue for understanding children's social goals. Ceremonial activity is conventionalized communication individuals use independent of the observable substantive objectives of interaction. Purely ceremonial activity is that to which no substantive objectives can be traced. Making sense of purely ceremonial activity offers a way to understand children's social perceptions and goals. What do children gain from interactions which seem disconnected from substantive

objectives? What are the sources of frustration and satisfaction in such interactions? These are the kinds of questions which guided the analytic search for children's social motives.

Children on many occasions were observed having interactions in "baby talk." That is, they made contact verbally but without using understandable language. On other occasions, they used standard linguistic structures but substituted inappropriate or made-up words. Even though the communication of objective ideas was apparently not accomplished, children nevertheless talked back and forth and appeared to gain satisfaction from these exchanges. These kinds of ceremonial interactions ranged from brief, one-to-one contact exchanges to more complex group interchanges. Some examples from field note data follow.

During independent work at table 2, Terry suddenly turns to Holly, looks as if she will speak but pauses, then: "Me-me-ma-ma." Holly was concentrating on her work, turns to Terry: "Huh?" Terry: "Me-me-ma-ma." They hold eye contact and exchange smiles, then return to their work.

Gina returns to table 2 from restroom. She pauses behind her chair, staring at Benjamin. When he looks up, she gives him a big smile. Gina: "You lomp knee." [It appeared as if she wanted to make contact but couldn't think of anything to say.] Benjamin smiles, shifts in his seat, glances into her eyes, and nods. Gina [looking pleased] rolls her eyes and sits down.

As children work at table 2, Cheryl: "Terry, do you know what a 'masterraft' is?" Terry: "Uh-un." Cheryl: "It's something like a treasure." Robin: "Did you mention treasure?" Cheryl repeats: "Treasure . . . treasure . . .

beasure . . . easure . . . " [excited voice]. Amy: "Igloo . . . igloo." Robin: "Igloo be quiet" [using Igloo as a person's name]. Cheryl: "Igloo shuddup." Gina: "Igloo."

Children involved in these largely ceremonial interactions enjoyed the attention and affirmative responses of peers. They smiled, made warm eye contact, and giggled together. They appeared to gain satisfaction from being engaged with others in positive social exchange even when there was no apparent substance to their communications. These interchanges were more than the playful use of language as some linguists might suggest. The outcomes of such interactions may include, as a byproduct, the practice or exploration of newly acquired linguistic abilities (Garvey, 1977). However, from the participants' perspectives, the goal was not to practice using language but to connect with peers. For example, in the following excerpt, when one child was frustrated in his attempts to make contact with another through the use of baby talk, he switched to a more direct approach to accomplish his goal.

Rod is chanting patterns of baby talk syllables to Elizabeth: "Do-do-ba-ba, do-do-ba-ba, do-ba-da-da, do-ba-da-da . . ." Elizabeth does not respond. Rod: "Ooh, look at my rubber band (*Elmer's Glue* hanging from the ends of his fingers). I'ma put some on your nose." He puts his face close to hers and makes movements like he's wiping it on her face. Elizabeth plays along, smiles, and turns away as if to dodge the glue.

Analysis of the ceremonial elements which inhere in children's substantively directed interactions provided

more evidence that affiliation with peers was a social goal of children. In all kinds of child-to-child classroom contexts, children's interactions contained evidence suggesting that being in contact with others, being cared for by others, and being thought a desirable companion by others were important social goals. The substantive activities involved in the field note excerpts below provided contexts within which the attainment of social goals could be worked out. The substantive objectives evident on the surface of these interactions were taken to be legitimate and important to the participants. The analysis here sought to explore the ceremonial or social objectives which Goffman (1967) asserted are below the surface of all substantive activities observed by others. Studying the ways in which substantive goals were achieved provided a means for studying children's social goals. In the first example, the way one child persisted in questioning another revealed his desire to make contact as he provided help with materials.

Children at table 2 are working on a cut and paste phonics sheet and deer picture to be colored. As Roger finishes his cut and paste, he says to Sue: "Susie, you ready for your picture?" Sue does not respond. Roger moves to stack of pictures, picks up two, and returns to seat. As he hands Sue a picture: "Susie, you ready for your picture? Susie, you ready for your picture?"

Two other interaction events serve as examples of children using substantive activity as a context for the expression of affiliation goals.

Children at table 5 are using colored, transparent plastic shapes to trace a pattern. Sets of shapes are to be shared by pairs of children. George to Robin as he reaches for shapes shared by Robin and Nadine: "We don't have any little triangles." Robin, as George takes green triangle: "Here, take the yellow one (too)." Nadine: "Here's a purple." Robin: "We'll share."

Mrs. Shell has given the children 10 minutes of "choice time." At table 2, Holly and Tess sit down with Holly's coloring books and begin coloring. Mrs. Shell asks if anyone has to go to the bathroom and Holly goes. Sandra sits down in Holly's seat. Holly comes back and grabs the book: "No!" Sandra turns to the other side where Tess is coloring. Tess pulls her book away from Sandra: "Uh-un!" Sandra: "I wanna color." Tess: "No, I'm colorin' (in this book) and she's colorin' (in that one)." Sandra looks as if tears will start: "Can't I color too?" Holly: "O.K." They sit down together.

The examples demonstrate the relationship of children's social affiliation goals to substantive classroom activity. Children wanted to be associated in positive ways with their peers and expressed these motives across activity contexts. In both ceremonial and substantive interactions, affiliation goals proved to be important forces beneath the surface of children's face-to-face interactions.

Children used a variety of means to accomplish affiliation goals. They used a varied set of social moves designed to put them in contact with peers, they demonstrated a number of ways to check on their standing with classmates, and they used interactions in a variety of ways to express feelings of affection and belonging. Discussion of these areas follows.

Ways to Make Contact

Children's ways of making contact with peers were complex and reflected a broad range of social sophistication. Children were observed using contact strategies very much like those used by adults. However, on some occasions their contact strategies shared characteristics with access strategies observed in nursery school children (Corsaro, 1979). The descriptions which follow reflect this wide range of contact behaviors.

Children used direct requests and invitations as ways to make peer contact. Requests were questions such as, "Will you play with me?" delivered one-to-one, or public appeals, e.g., "Who will play with me?" Children had apparently learned that the more direct their requests were, the higher the risk undertaken in case of rejection. They usually reserved direct requests for close friends or for use after other less direct contact attempts had been unsuccessful. Invitations to join particular activities were a common "less direct" contact strategy. Invitations were usually, "You wanna . . . ?" questions; for example, "You wanna go in the playhouse?" or, "You wanna play with play-dough?" As is demonstrated in the following excerpt, children were not easily discouraged in their contact attempts. They generally repeated contact moves or tried new moves when attempts were unsuccessful.

Table 5 has been designated as a "play table" today. Two children are in the Playhouse, two are playing with a magnetic alphabet board, and Roger has the ladder

from the bunk beds. Holding it like a machine gun, Roger points the ladder at Frank who is playing with Terry: "Frank, stick 'em up." Frank does not look up and Roger repeats twice: "Frank, stick 'em up." Frank looks up but gives no other reaction. Roger moves to the playhouse: "Stick 'em up, James or Sarah." They do not react. Roger: "Who wants to play with me?" He repeats in softer, sadder voice: "Who wants to play with me?"

While children were working and playing together, they made contact using conversation openers which revealed the utilization of an interaction etiquette similar to that of adults. Children used conversation openers which compel responses from others. They used questions, appeals to the reciprocal nature of good manners, and compliments as they sought social contact with their classmates. Examples of these types of compelling conversation openers are presented below. They illustrate the importance of making contact as a social goal of children.

Bob, leaning forward and thrusting his finger toward Roger: "Look what I did to my finger." Roger does not look. Bob: "Looka my finger." He pushes it into Roger's face. Roger doesn't respond, keeps working. Bob: "Guess what I saw at the zoo." Roger: "What?" Bob: "I saw a big ol' giraffe." Roger: "Did you see the elephants? I got to touch one." Bob leans back in his chair with his eyes on Roger's face: "I saw a rhinoceros."

While completing work at table 2, Nadine sneezes. Terry: "Bless you." Nadine says nothing, sneezes again. Terry: "Bless you." After a pause, Terry repeats: "Nadine, bless you." Nadine [in uncertain tone]: "Bless you."

Benjamin calls across the room: "You look pretty today, Sue." Sandra echoes: "You look pretty today." Sue says nothing but

gives eye contact to Benjamin. Benjamin: "Sue, you look pretty today." Sandra: "You look pretty today, Sue." Sue: "Thank you, Benjamin." Benjamin: "You're welcome, Sue." Sandra: "You look pretty today, Sue." Sue does not respond, looks down, folds her arms, and leans back in her chair.

In the first example, Bob used a question to elicit a response from Roger when "Looka my finger" did not work. In the second, Terry pushed Nadine into responding by signalling that "Bless you" statements should be answered. Nadine received the signal and responded, even though she demonstrated her unfamiliarity with the standard etiquette. In the last example, Benjamin used the ritualized compulsion to respond to a compliment to help him make contact with Sue. Sandra echoed Benjamin's pattern but the tactic did not work for her. Sue's silence was an act of public rejection. Children sometimes used less direct contact methods that greatly reduced the chances of facing the kind of rejection Sandra suffered.

Indirect contact strategies included teasing, clowning, joking, and baby talk. These strategies provided an automatic escape if rejection ensued. The child whose indirect attempts were not well received could protest, "I was just playing." That is, they could claim another meaning for their actions. Goffman (1971) described "remedies" which adults use to redefine unfavorable meanings attributed to their behavior. These remedies share characteristics with children's indirect contact strategies. An example of the latter follows.

Rod is teasing Elizabeth by chanting rhymes in baby talk (Jack and Jill, Two Little Lovebirds, and Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire). Elizabeth calls out to teacher: "Mrs. Shell, he won't quit botherin' me." Rod: "I'm only playin' with you."

Children on the fringes of the interactive exchanges of others were sometimes observed repeating phrases spoken by those involved in the primary exchange. This echoing behavior seldom won the echoer a place in the group. In most cases, children would not respond to an echoed phrase.

Sometimes children placed themselves in close proximity with others involved in social interaction without using verbal entry moves. In Corsaro's (1979) study of the interactions of preschoolers, "nonverbal entry" strategies were the most frequently used "access rituals" employed by the children. In the kindergarten setting of this study, moving closer to others almost never provided access to interactions. This may explain why the "proximity strategy" was used so infrequently.

Ways to Check on Standings with Peers

Children used a variety of strategies for finding out how others were seeing them. Children used direct and indirect approaches to determine where they stood as affiliation partners. As with contact strategies, the more direct the method of gaining responses, the higher the risk of rejection. The typical form of direct checks on standings with peers was, "I like you; do you like me?" A negative response to such a question was difficult to deliver. The askers exhibited their vulnerability by expressing their

affection and then, in effect, dared their friends to reject their overtures.

Children used indirect approaches more often than direct approaches to get feedback on their standings with peers. "We're the same, huh?" was a common form for indirect approaches in this area. Children worked at aligning themselves with others by pointing out similarities in their classwork, experiences, and, as in the following example, superior standing in relation to others.

Nadine, referring to Bob: "He doesn't know what he doin'." Tess: "He don't know what he's doin'. We know what we're doin' 'cause we're bigger. We're bigger, ain't we, Roger? We're bigger 'n Bob, ain't we, Roger?" Roger: "Yeah." Tess: "And we're smarter, huh?"

In this incident, Bob became the object around which Nadine, Tess, and Roger established their mutual affiliation. If any discomfort was associated with demeaning Bob, it was overridden by their desire to establish their standings among themselves.

Ways to Express Feelings of Affection and Belonging

As noted above, direct expressions of affection such as "I love you" or "I like you" were rare and usually followed with an appeal for a reciprocation of feelings, i.e., "Do you love/like me?" Children utilized a number of other strategies for expressing their affection for one another. One such strategy was to shower affiliates with attention, praise, or offers of gifts. Most children used this strategy at one time or another. Relatively few children,

however, were the object of these effusive expressions. Elizabeth was a member of this select group. The interactions presented below reflect moves directed toward Elizabeth by three classmates.

Children are entering room prior to opening bell. Rod is carrying a mesh fruit bag with 25-30 matchbox cars. He walks around the room showing cars. Several children follow him and ask: "Can I have one?" or "Can I hold one?" Rod says, "Nope" and walks. He stops at table 3, takes out a car and presents it to Elizabeth: "Here." She looks pleased and embarrassed, looking alternately at the car and Rod's face.

As they cut out valentines at table 2, Elizabeth: "See my baby valentine." Dee Dee takes one side of the valentine: "Oh, Elizabeth!" [sounded like genuine admiration]. Rod: "I made some hearts. I made some hearts. I made some hearts." No responses. Rod: "Elizabeth, I made some hearts. Hey, Elizabeth. Elizabeth." She does not look up from her cutting. Sandra looks at Elizabeth's heart: "Oh, Elizabeth, that's so pretty." Elizabeth looks up and smiles.

Children offered help to other children, shared materials, and performed minor courtesies as ways of expressing feelings of affection. These interaction moves were exchanged among virtually all of the children on occasion. They had a quality of cooperation about them in contrast to the obsequious character of the showers of attention described above. It was clear across observations that being cooperative, helpful, and courteous were valued by children as they interacted. They used these behaviors to send important affiliation signals.

Another way children expressed feelings of affection was to take the side of a peer involved in a dispute or to come to the aid of a peer who had been physically or emotionally hurt. Children understood that expressions of loyalty and sympathy were valuable tools for demonstrating their worth as affiliates. Their support and consolations were often dramatic and public in manifestation, as if to guarantee the impression that "I'm the kind of person who cares about and stands up for my friends."

Children in the study expressed their feelings of affection through physical contact. They hugged, wrestled, bumped and nudged, held hands, groomed, and touched each other in all classroom contexts. For boys and girls, being in physical contact with peers was very important. Often boys were observed putting a "roughhouse" face on their touching. They wrestled, pushed, and bumped more often than girls. While waiting for a turn at a game or lining up for lunch, boys were more likely to be picking each other up or gripping each other in headlocks, while girls might be holding hands or playing with each other's hair or clothing.

Adult notions of personal space seemed not to have been developed in these children. When children were working, listening to stories, playing, or eating lunch, they placed themselves in positions so that their knees, hips, elbows, arms, or legs were touching. Children used physical contact to express feelings of "groupness" or belonging. When they were involved in activities which were charged with

feelings of closeness with peers, spontaneous touching, hand holding, and hugging, along with warm smiles and shared eye contact were nonverbal ways of expressing feelings of closeness. The following excerpt is an example of two children expressing their feelings of shared association.

Tess and Nadine are sitting in adjoining folding chairs in the auditorium as the four kindergarten classes meet together to practice their 'February' assembly program. The girls are constantly in physical contact. They lean forward on their chairs with their shoulders touching. They put their hands on each other's legs and grab each other's hands, arms, and clothing. They put their heads together and rub knees. As they sing "This Land Is Your Land," they look into each other's eyes, lean into one another, and smile warmly on parts of the song they both know (the chorus). Between songs, Tess moves the puffed sleeve away from her armpit and sticks it in Nadine's face. They grab each other in a fit of giggling ["aren't we awful?"]. During the next song, Tess puts her hands on her hips and holds herself as if she's singing on stage. She looks to Nadine for recognition. As they sing, Nadine flips Tess' hair. Tess pulls away but Nadine continues. At end of song, Tess: "Stop that." On the valentine's song which ends "I'm going to mail myself to you," the girls point to each other, look into each other's eyes, and sing the line with enthusiasm.

Children shared feelings of belonging and groupness, as they made "small talk" around their assigned school tasks, as they played with words and songs and created fantasy worlds in their play, and as they enjoyed being "naughty" together. The shared quality of these interactions was signalled by close physical proximity and touching and by warm, "knowing" eye contacts (often one child would raise his or

her eyebrows, open eyes and mouth, and lean forward, looking for similar responses in the faces of peers).

To summarize, children used peer interactions to accomplish the social objectives of establishing contact, receiving feedback on their perceived worthiness as affiliates, and expressing feelings of affection and belonging. They demonstrated an elaborate understanding of symbolic, ceremonial activity and a developing sophistication in their knowledge of social etiquette. They utilized a complex variety of interaction strategies for accomplishing their affiliation goals.

Competence Goals

Competence goals were discovered to be a second domain of children's social objectives. In their face-to-face interactions with peers, children utilized a variety of strategies to establish that they were able students, capable of accomplishing school tasks, and that they deserved to be classified among the academically competent.

Children's classroom interactions contained abundant evaluative behavior. Children scrutinized the work of others and offered evaluations. Often they compared their work with that of others and frequently solicited evaluations from peers. They made special efforts to associate themselves with peers who were thought to be academically successful. Some field note examples demonstrate the evaluative tone which characterized many interactions.

During an activity with the art resource teacher, Cheryl watches Amy as they complete

each step (they're constructing a three-dimensional bird). Amy uses her crayon to make dots on one of the cut-out pieces (not part of the instructions). Cheryl sees Amy and stands to get a better look. Amy holds up her work: "You like that?" Cheryl: "What is it?" Amy: "They're little spots so he can . . . [she can't think of anything]. You like that?" Cheryl looks nonplussed, says nothing, and sits down.

Children are making valentines at table 2. Amy to Elizabeth: "I'm finished, isn't it pretty?" Amy holds up her work. Elizabeth starts to deliver an enthusiastic "Ye . . ." but stops as she looks at Amy's valentine [which is a mess]. Elizabeth looks uncomfortable. Amy studies Elizabeth's expression and says: "It's not so good, huh?" Elizabeth wrinkles her nose, avoids eye contact with Amy and goes back to work.

Elizabeth to Benjamin: "You weren't supposed to do this." She holds up the remains of a paper he has cut apart. Benjamin: "Why?" Elizabeth: "'Cause they have to use these in the other groups." Sandra: "I didn't (do it wrong like Benjamin)." Teresa holds hers up: "I didn't." Sandra: "I didn't. I didn't." Benjamin points to Sandra's scrap pile: "Yes, you did." She did.

Children evaluated and sought the evaluations of peers.

Analysis of patterns of evaluation exchanges suggested that children were using interactions to establish and confirm their academic competence in relation to others. The excerpts above offer examples of children exchanging information upon which determinations of competence were based. As with all socially constructed "objects," the competence attributed to each child was being renegotiated at each interaction in which evidence of skill or achievement was brought forth. Examining the ways children constructed and

renegotiated their perceived competence will demonstrate the pervasive influence of competence goals on classroom social interactions.

Competence, as it is being used here, refers only to skills, abilities, and achievements related to things academic. Since such competence is always related in some degree to the substantive activity associated with classroom performance, purely ceremonial activity revealing competence goals was not evident in the data of the study. Children's competence goals were identified through the analysis of face-to-face ceremonial behavior around the classroom work in this kindergarten. Ways to request evaluation and ways to respond to evaluation were domains of behavior which led to an understanding of children's social goals in this area.

Ways to Request Evaluation

Children based a large part of their personal estimations of individual academic competence on the evaluations of peers. The evaluations of adults in the classroom, especially the teacher, were important, but children continually sought feedback regarding the merits of their work in child-to-child interactions. Some children seemed to need evaluative feedback more than others. The data are filled with requests for evaluation from particular children. Even though evaluation seeking was not evenly distributed among children, all children in the study were observed requesting peer evaluation.

While working on their assigned tasks at the independent work table (table 2), children often stopped working, held up their work to a peer, and said, "Look at this," or "How's this?" Children varied this direct approach to requesting evaluation by forming "loaded" questions designed to influence the evaluation and/or provide a protective cover in the event that the evaluation was negative. Three examples of loaded requests follow.

Louise and James are painting. Louise comes to James' side of the easel, studies his painting, says: "Oh, your sun is pretty, wanna see my pretty sun?"

Sandra gets up from her seat at table 2, walks around to position next to Elizabeth, thrusts the camel picture she's been coloring in front of Elizabeth, and says: "Do you hate it?"

Sandra is standing between Elizabeth and Amy at table 2. Sandra to Elizabeth: "Yours is pretty," referring to her coloring. Amy to Sandra: "Do you like mine?"

Children demonstrated a well developed awareness of the ways that phrasing questions or timing the delivery of questions can influence responses. Louise, in the first example above, set up a situation in which it would be very difficult for James to do other than find her sun pretty. In order to evaluate her sun as less than pretty, he would have to openly challenge her view that her sun was pretty and prove himself insensitive to her generous evaluation of his efforts.

In the second excerpt, Sandra influenced Elizabeth's response and covered herself from a negative evaluation by

asking, "Do you hate it?" Goffman (1967, p. 29) described similar behavior which he called "negative-attribute etiquette." Using this etiquette, adults protect themselves from the embarrassment of having others discover their inadequacies by beginning encounters with an open admission of their failings.

In the last example, Amy used the positive momentum of Sandra's evaluation of Elizabeth's work to influence Sandra's evaluation of her own efforts. Amy seemed to understand that Sandra's evaluation of her work was, because of the timing of her request, a comparison of the work of Amy and Elizabeth.

In addition to direct requests, loaded and otherwise, children utilized other ways of requesting evaluation. The expectation that peer evaluation would take place was so well developed in the classroom that it reached the taken-for-granted level. On many occasions, when children completed particular tasks or even steps within tasks, they simply held their papers toward peers, said nothing, and, as expected, received evaluations. The understood quality of peer evaluation provided a context in which statements such as "I'm through" or "Finished" became abbreviated forms of evaluation requests. The taken-for-granted nature of evaluation request patterns provides strong evidence for the importance of peer evaluation as a contributor to children's social goals in face-to-face interactions. The fact that evaluation requests had, because of their familiarity

to classroom participants, become symbolically abbreviated (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), illuminates the extent of influence competence goals had on classroom social behaviors.

Ways to Respond to Evaluation

The ways children responded to evaluations, solicited or otherwise, offered by peers gives insight into how important the appearance of competence was in the studied classroom. When positive evaluations were received, children reacted with joy, reciprocal praise, and occasional arrogance. As was evident in the examples above, children felt a great need to receive positive feedback on their schoolwork. Their reputations as competent students were at risk in each interaction involving evaluation. When evaluations were favorable, they showed their relief and satisfaction.

Negative evaluations from peers brought out an assortment of strategies for dealing with the effects of such evaluations on children's goals of feeling competent and appearing competent to classmates. Children's responses to negative evaluations ranged from attacking the evaluator to quietly acceding to his or her judgement.

On several occasions, children reacted to negative peer evaluations by taking offensive (as opposed to defensive) action against those evaluating them. Most commonly, they turned negative judgements back on the evaluators. Occasionally they tossed bitter retorts back at evaluators or attempted to discredit evaluators by making them appear

callous or cruel. The excerpts below are examples of some offensive responses.

James to Bob as they color at table 2:
"You scribble ugly." [Bob's coloring
is improving but he's not in the same
league with James] Bob's bottom lip
sticks out: "You scribble ugly." Roger
puts his arm around Bob's neck, says
to James: "You scribble ugly."

Roger watches Jerome struggle with cutting
activity: "Oh, Jerome, you gotta stay on
the lines." Jerome: "Oh, shuddup! Don't
tell me what to do, Mr. Roger."

The assignment at table 2 is to draw a
safety patrol poster. Sandra: "Rod, look,
look at mine." Rod looks up from his
coloring and studies her work: "So . . .
(pause) . . . so where is it?" Sandra,
in hurt voice: "Huh?" Rod: "You didn't
draw no patrol." Sandra: "So, you're
just mean. Mean, mean, mean."

Goffman (1967) discussed ways adults attempt to make corrections when they have committed a miscue and been challenged by others. He described two "classic" approaches to correcting the offense.

On the one hand, an attempt can be made to show that what admittedly appeared to be a threatening expression is really a meaningless event, or an unintentional act, or a joke not meant to be taken seriously, or an unavoidable, "understandable" product of extenuating circumstances. On the other hand, the meaning of the event may be granted and effort concentrated on the creator of it. Information may be provided to show that the creator was under the influence of something and not himself, or that he was under the command of somebody else and not acting for himself.
(p. 20)

Children in the study utilized variations of these approaches as they attempted to recover from the critical

evaluations of peers. In the first example below, Robin made light of his cutting error by joking and laughing. He took responsibility while sending the message that the incident was not important to him. In the second, Rod made an attempt to blame outside influences for his error.

Nadine, pointing to Robin who has cut his valentine in half because he didn't follow directions: "He messed up." Robin, in a silly voice: "Hey, I made a valentine pop-up." Nadine: "You still messed up." Robin laughs: "Oh, I messed up. I'm takin' my valentine home." He leaves the table.

The class plays a game in which they are assigned numbers to remember. Tess to Rod, after he has run with the wrong group: "You're a three" [in an 'I caught you' tone]. Rod: "Uh-un, I was with her and she ran" (pointing to Gina).

Children sometimes flatly denied that their work was deficient. They covered their work with their arms, turned their papers face down, and even corrected errors while protesting, "It is not wrong."

Another frequently used response to negative evaluation was simply not to acknowledge it. Children changed the subject, turned away from evaluators, or carefully ignored their critics in order to avoid dealing directly with negative critiques. Below, Holly used denial to handle the discovery of her incorrect work. When her evaluators persisted, she ended the interaction by turning away from them and starting a conversation with another child.

Eddy to Holly: "Oh-oh, you did yours wrong." She covers her bird coloring with her arms, says: "Uh-un." Eddy: "Yeah, you did. You colored it wrong."

Phillip: "Yeah, it's wrong." Holly looks uncomfortable, shifts in her seat [looking for a way out]. She turns her back on Eddy and Phillip and says to Cheryl: "See how short my fingernail is."

Holly's means of escape from this situation is an example of a larger phenomenon which characterized interactions across contexts and social goals. Holly ended the evaluative encounter by simply withdrawing from it. Children's interactions often "fizzled" away without the closure which is compulsory in adult interchanges. Children left interactions without an "exit" move. They simply stopped interacting in what seemed to be the middle of things. The researcher noted this incomplete quality in preliminary analyses and made an effort to discover hidden exit signals or special definitions of closure, but with little success. It may be that children are not left with the unsettled feeling which adults share when interactive exchanges are not symbolically closed (Goffman, 1967). Adults certainly want to "disappear" from embarrassing situations at times. They usually stay and face the discomfort because they would further jeopardize their interactive standing by removing themselves without explanation. For these kindergarten children, however, escaping from the effects of negative evaluations or other threats by refusing to continue interactions was a legitimate and effective strategy.

A final way children responded to negative evaluations was to accept the accuracy of the criticism, though

begrudgingly at times, and move to correct the problem. Statements such as "I know" and "I'm gonna fix it" were common in such responses. Children taking this tack tried to minimize their embarrassment by quickly admitting their mistake so that evaluators were made to appear insensitive if they continued drawing attention to the error.

Children's complex ways of seeking and responding to peer evaluations argue for the thesis of this section; that children used child-to-child interactions to accomplish competence goals. When they interacted in peer groups where schoolwork was the topic of substance, their ceremonial objectives included feeling competent with regard to school tasks and believing that others placed them among those students considered to be capable.

Status Goals

The division of social goals into affiliation, competence, and status domains provides the structure necessary for conceptualizing them. However, in the flow of child-to-child interactions, making discrete distinctions among domains is impossible. Data analysis revealed that children were managing forces generated by their goals in all three areas. Goal interrelationships will be discussed later. For now, it is important to make a distinction between status goals and competence goals.

Competence goals were always tied to some observable behavior related to a school task. Children wished to feel capable of performing up to classroom expectations and to

appear academically competent to their peers. Status goals were not necessarily tied to academic performance and always had to do with perceptions of influence and importance in relation to peers. Interactions in which the accomplishment of competence goals were being worked out among children were almost always colored by the overlapping influence of status objectives. The expression of status goals was not restricted to interactions involving schoolwork, but was evident across activity contexts.

Status, as it is used here, assumes the possibility of constructing a hierarchical arrangement of children from those with the least influence and peer esteem to those most respected and most able to exercise power over others. Children's interactions reflected their efforts to improve their position in such a hierarchy. Children's status objectives included the following: to feel more important or better in some ways than classroom peers, to be able to exercise dominance over others, to manipulate or control the actions of others, and to be able to assert their standing in relationship to the status of others. These goals were evident in many of the interactions analyzed in this study. Many interactions involving status goals seemed to be unrelated to any observable substantive activity; that is, they were dominated by ceremonial interactive behavior. Almost all interactions which were organized around substantive activities included identifiable status-related motives.

Children's conversations in small groups often followed this general form: one child made a statement which reflected his or her superiority (an accomplishment, a possession, or a personal quality was usually described); other children matched or topped the original statement with proclamations of their own; the first speaker reasserted his/her superiority; and the cycle continued. An example of this common form follows.

Don: "I'm tellin' my pet fox to come to school." (Coloring a fox picture is part of their assignment at table 2.) James: "I'ma tell my pet fox to come to school." Don: "I'ma tellin' all my foxes to come to school." Roger: "I'ma have my daddy beat you all up." Don: "I gonna have all my foxes beat all those that's not my friend." Tess: "So what? I've got a German Shepherd." James: "I've got a German Shepherd." Sarah: "So, I got a Doberman." Don: "I've got a bunch." Tess to Don: "My German Shepherd'll bite you." Don: "I've got lots of zoo animals."

In one-to-one interactions and in small groups, children found a variety of ways to promote their own importance and to devalue the importance of others. They spent considerable time and energy introducing favorable information about themselves and unfavorable information about others. Whereas adults practice such behaviors in highly ritualized and subtle ways (Goffman, 1967), children in this study felt no need to disguise their self-promotions or attacks on others. The norm was to proclaim superiority, then defend against the inevitable challenges; or in the case of "put-downs," to point out the inadequacies of others, then react to their protestations.

For some children, it was important to demonstrate dominance over other children. Some forced others to give up territory or materials using physical force or the threat of physical force. Some ordered others around, called them names, and otherwise abused them verbally. One child (Sarah), continued an on-going dominance relationship over another child (Bob) for the duration of the study.

While dominating behavior was seen consistently in only a few children, almost all children used peer interactions to attempt to manipulate or control the actions of others. Trying to control the acts of others sometimes worked to the disadvantage of those attempting the control acts. When those who were the object of such actions could turn the tables on their peers, those attempting to manipulate appeared foolish or inept. In the first example below, Rod successfully commanded Elizabeth, then, while he was feeling his superior status, anticipated a mistake in her performance. In the second excerpt, Benjamin seemed to be looking for someone to direct and was not successful.

Rod and Elizabeth each have a set of rubber squares with numerals. They are each putting their own set in order at table 2. Rod gets to the end of the table and places his numeral across the end, moving into a space occupied by Elizabeth. Rod: "Move Elizabeth. Move Elizabeth." She moves. After Rod finishes, he studies Elizabeth as she works: "You better not put that." Elizabeth: "I didn't."

Benjamin to Teresa: "You got to wash your hands." Teresa: "I'm not finished yet." Benjamin: "I'm not finished either. You got to wash your hands." Teresa: "Not 'til I'm finished." Benjamin: "I'm not

talkin' to you. I'm talkin' to Dee Dee." Dee Dee looks at him [with a self-satisfied expression], and wiggles her fingers in his face to show they are clean of paste. Benjamin: "So, I bet you have to wash your hair." Dee Dee: "No, I don't." Benjamin: "So, I don't either." With this, Benjamin glances at Dee Dee and leaves the table.

Much of children's interaction was characterized by the point-counterpoint quality of the last field note example. Children used peer interactions to improve their standings in relation to the status of others. They asserted their importance and attempted to diminish the importance of peers. The abilities to present one's self in a favorable light and to generate credible counters to status threatening behaviors by peers were important assets in an atmosphere in which relative status was redefined over and over. In the following sections, ways to practice self-promotion, ways to respond to self-promotion, ways to put others down, and ways to defend against put-downs will be presented. The description of these interaction typologies will further establish the pervasive influence of status goals on the social behavior of the young children in this classroom.

Ways to Practice Self-Promotion

Self-promoting behaviors among children involved offering information in interactions which had the effect of making the offerer appear superior in some way. In their most basic form, self-promotions were built on I am . . . , I have . . . , I did . . . , I will . . . , I can . . . ,

or I know . . . statements. Elizabeth demonstrates the basic form in the following interaction with Dee Dee.

Elizabeth: "I can talk Mexico." Dee Dee: "So can I." Elizabeth: "I can say 'good-bye'--adios amigo." Dee Dee is silent. She purses her lips looks as though she can't think of a word to match Elizabeth's. Elizabeth: "Adios amigo. Adios amigo. That means . . . adios means 'good-bye' and amigo means 'my good friend.' Adios amigo." Dee Dee, still looking troubled: "I got a Strawberry Shortcake." Elizabeth: "Si senior means 'yes,' and Don Diego means 'I gotta go peepee.'" They giggle together.

Closely related to this basic "I am superior" form were statements in which children identified characteristics or possessions of family members, or others with whom the children were closely associated, which cast a favorable light on the speaker. Frequently these self-promotions began with my daddy . . . or my mommy . . . The most common statement among statements of this kind was, "My daddy can beat your daddy."

Ways to Respond to Self-Promotion

As mentioned above, the ways in which children responded to status gaining attempts by others were as important to achieving status goals as self-promoting or aggressive kinds of moves. As relative status was defined and redefined in children's interactions, the ability to utilize a variety of defensive-reactive strategies for neutralizing the promotions of others, while placing one's self in a favorable position, was a valuable asset. Many of the strategies used by children in response to self-promoting behaviors of peers are described below.

Children utilized "one-upsmanship" and "bandwagon" strategies in response to self-promotions. One-upsmanship responses attempted to neutralize or diminish the effects of self-promotions by matching or topping the promoter's information. Bandwagon strategies were responses in which the respondents reacted to self-promotions by identifying themselves with the promoter or with the behavior being promoted. Two excerpts offer examples of one-upsmanship and bandwagon responses.

At table 5, Mrs. Shell explains how the children are to reproduce a pattern of geometric shapes. As she leaves, she says: "Get one pattern done and, if you have time, do one on the other side." After she leaves, four children of the five at the table take turns making "I got time for ____" statements. They filled the blank with numbers which designated how many patterns they expected to complete. The sequence of numbers was: "two," "three," "24," "64," "83," "1000," "2000," "151," "that much" (gesturing with hands wide apart), "a million," and "152." Each child repeated the phrase, "I got time for ____" as he or she delivered the number.

Gina brings a small plastic duck to table 2, says: "I got a duck that smells. Wanna smell?" Amy: "I got one of those little ducklings." Holly: "I do, too." Eddy to Amy: "Everything somebody say, you say."

Eddy's statement at the end of the last example is an example of "challenging" behavior. Children used challenges to devalue the sources from which self-promoters were trying to gain status, or to discredit the self-promoters themselves. Children used approaches which ranged from simple

challenges such as "So what!" or "No, you didn't" to more complex challenges which involved building logical cases against the contentions of self-promoters. Two examples which demonstrate children's ability to use complex challenges follow.

Gina: "I know how to spell 'cat.'" Eddy: "How?" Gina: "C-A-T." Eddy: "So?" Amy: "I know how to spell D . . . , I mean, I know how to spell 'dad,' D-A-D." Robin: "P-Q-D-L." Eddy challenges Amy: "Spell 'bird.'" Amy: "I can't spell 'bird' but I can spell 'dad,' D-A-D." Eddy does not respond.

George: "I'm gonna color a tree and a cactus." Terry: "I climbed up a cactus once." George: "Uh-un, nobody could climb a cactus. Even if they had gloves, you couldn't climb a cactus." Terry: "I did." George: "There aren't any cactus around here. Where did you climb a cactus?" Terry: "In my yard. We got a cactus in our yard." George: "You got any little babies?" Terry: "No, but my mama's gonna have one." George: "Well, what if that baby got stuck by that cactus?" Terry gulps and looks down. Nadine: "I got a cactus and he like me." George: "How you know he likes you? Cactus can't talk.". Nadine: "He let me hold him." George: "You can't hold a cactus and they're too heavy even to pick up." Nadine: "Uh-un, I held this one." George: "I'm gonna color my cactus." Nadine, with a sneer: "So-o-o what!"

In the first excerpt, Eddy attempted to discredit Amy's claim that she was a speller. She accepted his point but pressed her superiority as one who can spell "dad." In the second interchange, George called assertions projected by Terry and Nadine into question. He used his knowledge of cactus, questioning, and inferencing skills of high order (i.e., it would be too dangerous to have cactus in

your yard if you had a baby in your family) to construct logical challenges. Terry escaped from the interaction by dropping her eyes and otherwise signalling that she would not respond further. Nadine got the last word by letting George know that she was unimpressed with his declaration of what he intended to do.

Another way children responded to self-promotions was to simply ignore them. Again, children's refusals to respond to direct communication from peers are almost unknown in adult interaction. When ignoring does occur with adults, the message to the interactant whose communication is ignored is, "You have so little status that I owe you not even the most basic courtesy." When children ignored self-promoting behaviors, promoters were not devastated but carried on as if the object of their promotions had simply not heard them.

A final way in which children responded to self-promotion was to accept the credibility of the promoter and the validity of his or her claims. Accepting responses were very rarely observed in the study. When acceptance was observed, it was apparent that affiliation goals (to appear to be a supportive, therefore attractive, affiliate) took precedence over status goals.

Ways to Put Others Down

Children's relative positions in the classroom status hierarchy could be improved by raising themselves up or by causing the influence and peer prestige of others to go down.

Ways of aggressively attempting to damage the status of others will be called "put-downs." Successful put-downs not only caused others to lose influence or prestige, but offered evidence of the power and social adeptness of the child accomplishing the put-down.

The most common kind of put-downs occurred when children pointed out the mistakes, weaknesses, or inadequacies of others. These and most other put-downs had a "public" quality which is important to understanding their place in children's status goals. Put-downs were seldom communicated in private conversations from individual to individual, but were almost always undertaken with a wider audience in mind. Social esteem rests in the perceptions of others. Children publicly proclaimed the inadequacies of peers in an effort to maximize the impact of the put-down. The excerpts below are examples of interactions which were very common in the classroom. The examples show children pointing out mistakes, negative personal attributes, and "poor" dressing habits of other children.

Mrs. Shell has instructed children to take three strips of paper from the box being passed through the class. Eddy sees Phillip take only two strips, says: "You're spoze to have three of 'em." Phillip: "Two." Eddy: "You don't know what you're talkin' 'bout. Holly, tell this dumbhead he's spoze to have three."

Amy has begun passing out pencils while Mrs. Shell is still giving instructions. Cheryl [in a voice meant for more than just Amy]: "Hey, put those pencils back." Mrs. Shell stops and makes Amy sit down.

As Rod returns to his seat after sharing his puzzle at show and tell, Elizabeth: "Rod always has to act like a gentleman." Rod: "What?" [He heard but doesn't know what she means.] Elizabeth: "Rod always has to act like a gentleman, ah-ah-ah." As she says this, Elizabeth half-closes her eyes, tilts her head in a refined attitude, holds up her wrist and bends it in an aristocratic gesture on each 'ah.' Rod looks down and does not respond.

Gina and Cheryl are admiring themselves and each other in the mirror. Tess comes up, says to Gina: "You wore that (red playsuit) yesterday." Gina: "My mommy wants me to." Tess: "Did you want to?" Gina [looking uncomfortable]: "Uh-huh." Tess: "You wore the same socks, too. And the same shoes." Gina [trying to change subject]: "I don't have shoes like yours." Tess: "You wore the same socks and the same shoes yesterday." Gina slides away to her seat.

Occasionally, some children used more subtle strategies for revealing unfavorable information about peers while securing favorable status for themselves. One such strategy was to turn a condescending attitude on classmates (e.g., "You're actin' silly, I'm doin' somethin' else," or "We're not talkin' like that, we're not even going to repeat it"). Another indirect kind of strategy was to confront others with "loaded" questions. Loaded questions were those which, while appearing to be innocent, were calculated to force children to either do what the asker wished or place themselves in an unfavorable position (e.g., "Are you going to make me an 'I love you' card or just a plain one?").

Name calling was another put-down strategy used by children. Frequently, name calling accompanied other put-downs. Name calling included pointed statements such as,

"You're stupid" and "You're the baddest kid in here" as well as derogatory references such as "dumbhead," "dork," and "do-do head." Elkind (1976) has suggested that name calling signals the young child's ability to distinguish between words and the things they symbolize. The name calling described here did not have the quality of verbal play to which Elkind referred. There was an element of dominance in name calling behavior, as if an understood part of the message sent when calling another child dummy was, "and I dare you to do something about it."

Children demonstrated their attempts to exercise power over peers in ordering behavior, threats, and physical intimidation. Ordering behaviors were usually associated with establishing territories, securing materials, or managing the behavior of others. Children used an ordering tone to get children to change locations (e.g., "sit down," "get away from me," "move over"); to acquire materials ("gimme that," "get some more"); and to control others ("don't do that," "stop that," "keep quiet"). Children threatened each other with physical attack (e.g., "I'ma hit you," "I'll give you a black eye"); with exposure to the teacher ("I'm gonna tell"); and with unspecified consequences in "you better" statements ("you better not mess with me," "you better stop") which carried an unspoken but clearly communicated 'or else' with them. Physical force was used by a small number of children and during the study no "fights" between children were observed. As mentioned above, the relationship between

Sarah and Bob was characterized by her verbal and physical domination. She ordered him about, called him names, and slapped him around continually. Other children occasionally hit, kicked, and pinched peers, but not according to any observable pattern. Many of the behaviors described above are demonstrated in the following excerpt. The relationship between Sarah and Bob is revealed and name calling, threatening, ordering, and physical dominance are exemplified.

Bob is singing in baby talk as he works with the magnetic alphabet board. He repeats the phrase 'Bambi head' several times. He turns to Sarah: "You a Bambi head." Sarah slides her chair over to Bob and slaps him on the arm. After she returns, Bob repeats: "You a Bambi head." Sarah starts for him but Bob slaps himself on the spot where she had slapped. George to Sarah: "Don't you hit him." Sarah: "He can't call me a Bambi head." George: "You're not gonna slap him." Sarah: "I ain't no Bambi." George: "I'll slap you." Sarah: "You'll get in trouble." George: "I ain't gonna slap you, but I'ma tell." George turns to get Mrs. Shell's attention. She's busy and they let it drop.

Children generally were not gracious winners when they came out on top in confrontations with peers. A final way children put others down was to "rub it in" when one child bested another. Public proclamations such as, "I beat you," "I got it and you didn't," or "I showed you" were common in the classroom. Rubbing it in behavior serves to accent the critical point; putting others down was a strategy children used for improving their relative status by diminishing the influence and prestige of others while asserting their own.

Ways to Respond to Put-Downs

Children demonstrated a well developed arsenal of defensive responses to put-down attempts by peers. These defensive strategies were important to children as they worked at protecting their status from the potential damages others could inflict. Since being foiled in attempts to discredit others offered public evidence of a kind of social ineptness, defensive responses probably served to deter put-downs to some degree.

One way children responded to put-downs was to categorically deny the accuracy of the information presented in the put-down. Such denials had the tone of righteous indignation. Usually these took form in statements such as, "No, I didn't" or "Yes, I can." The tone of categorical denials seemed to carry the additional message, "And I'll hear no more about it."

Children also tried to refute logically the accuracy of negative information directed at them. They constructed logical cases from the actual situations involved, called on other children to witness the efficacy of their arguments, and on occasion, fabricated evidence in their own defense. In the excerpt below, Benjamin attempted to discredit Sandra by name calling and accusing her of not knowing her colors. Sandra turned the tables on Benjamin by proving him wrong. Rod and Dee Dee offered information supporting Sandra's case, leaving Benjamin able only to offer a hollow denial of his original position. This interchange is a good example of

the potentially costly effects of an ill-advised put-down attempt.

Sandra to Benjamin: "Why did you use all those colors?" (They are coloring animal pictures.) Benjamin: "Shuddup Sandra-head." Sandra: "Sandra-head?" Benjamin: "You don't even know your colors." Sandra: "Uh-huh, look." She points to each crayon in her box and names its color correctly. Benjamin, holding up a purple crayon, says: "Uh-un, this is reddish . . . (pause)." Sandra: "That's purple." Benjamin: "Uh-un, you don't even know your colors." Sandra: "Yes, I do, watch me." She goes through them correctly again. Benjamin: "This isn't purple, it's red." Rod: That's not red. Dee Dee, is that red?" Dee Dee: "No." Benjamin [tries to save face]: "It's purple. I said it was purple."

Another strategy for handling put-downs was to take an offensive posture and turn the aggression of the put-down back on the child making the original move. The most common form of this strategy was to turn name calling, ordering, or threats around and direct them back on aggressors in the same form. "You're a baby, Jerome" elicited "You're a baby, James;" "You better move" was answered with "You better move;" and so forth. Sometimes children's aggressive responses went beyond echoing original put-downs. Some children embarrassed their challengers by accusing them of being "crazy" or "actin' funny." Some children launched full-blown retaliatory put-downs of those who challenged their status. These counter put-downs were not necessarily related in substance to the original accusations. The purpose of the counter attack was to impress on the challenger and others in the group that "I am not to be taken lightly" and that "those who attack me put themselves at risk."

Another set of responses to put-downs included an array of aggressive sounding but empty rebuttals such as, "So," "Oh yeah," "Shuddup," and "You better stop." These responses were voiced by children who had experienced a loss of prestige because of a put-down and who wanted to salvage some self-respect with a comment. However, they were at a loss for words and could offer only a rebuttal that conveyed anger but was empty of substance.

Children also used turning away, changing the subject, and other forms of ignoring in response to put-down attempts. When children were in situations where their mistakes or inadequacies were being exposed by others, they often dropped their eyes to the floor, their chins to their chests, folded their arms, and waited for the spotlight to pass. Children in such situations were also observed turning away from accusers to begin conversation with someone else, ignoring the put-down, and offering an entirely new line of conversation. Sometimes they physically left the scene. The following excerpts include changing the subject as one child's response to the threat of telling the teacher and an example of leaving the scene when an inadequacy is exposed.

George and Tess are bantering back and forth: "My daddy'll beat your daddy." "So, my daddy'll beat your daddy's butt." "Your daddy's a water; cow; bear; jelly bean; etc." Finally, Tess seems bested, announces: "I'ma tell." George [detecting the possibility of being tattled on]: "Got a green?" (crayon). Tess checks her crayon box.

Nadine to Tess: "See, I color fast."
Tess: "Yeah, 'cause you scribble."

Nadine; "I'm not scribblin', see." Tess reaches over and points to places where Nadine has colored outside the lines, says: "That's scribbling." Nadine gets up from table and leaves, saying: "I need brown."

Another response to put-downs was to make a public appeal for sympathy. This kind of defense was used to deter physical aggression by exposing the cruelty of aggressors and attracting protective support from others. Loud cries of "You hurt me" or "That hurt," and dramatic weeping were used to bring acts of physical aggression to public attention. One classroom incident serves to demonstrate this strategy.

Sarah throws a pencil at Louise, hitting her across the fingers. Louise gets teary and finally breaks into soft crying. She surveys each face (including mine) to be sure each one sees she's hurt. Jerome sees her rippled lower lip and asks: "What's wrong with you?" Louise: "Sarah threw a pencil and hit these two fingers." Louise extends her fingers toward Jerome. Jerome: "I'ma tell. She hit her bad." Roger, in soft voice: "Don't cry, Louise." Sue: "It don't help to cry. It don't help to cry, do it Roger?" Sarah watches all this with arms folded and lower lip and chin thrust forward.

A final way children responded to put-downs was to accept the accuracy of negative information but work to reduce the effects by making a public confession, offering excuses, explaining the lack of severity of the offense, or "laughing off" the exposure as unimportant. Children made public gestures of accepting responsibility or making confession as strategies for reducing the damaging effects of being exposed in a compromising position. Typically they made a show

of correcting mistakes ("See, I fixed it") or promised to do better ("I'm going to do it right next time"). In some cases, they turned the words of their challengers on themselves, as in the following exchange:

Sue: "Bob, get to work, you're makin' me mad." Bob: "Yeah, I'm makin' me mad, too."

Children offered excuses to mitigate their embarrassment. Excuses included those related to the source of put-downs ("I lost my paper" or "I wasn't through yet") and those of a more general character ("I have a sore ear"). Children sometimes tried to reduce the impact of put-downs by laughing them off or explaining that they were not important. When faced with physical domination by others, some children allowed the aggressors to have their way, then covered by laughing and/or making statements to recover their status ("So, I don't care"). Children laughed off put-downs related to classroom performance in the same manner.

In this section, status goals and ways in which children sought to accomplish them have been explored. Children utilized face-to-face interactions to assert their status in relation to peers. They demonstrated facility with a number of offensive and defensive strategies for exercising power, establishing influence, and acquiring prestige in their peer interactions.

Summary

The social goals of children are the motives which lie beneath the surface of substantive classroom activity and

drive ceremonial behavior in face-to-face interactions. Analysis of child-to-child interactions in the kindergarten under investigation revealed three domains of social goals: affiliation, competence, and status goals.

Affiliation goals were those related to feeling accepted and valued by classroom associates. Children received satisfaction from feeling connected or being in friendly contact with peers. They sought feedback from others regarding their value as desirable interactive partners worthy of the affection of their classmates.

Children used a variety of interaction strategies to accomplish their affiliation goals. One set of such strategies was "ways to make contact." Among these were: direct requests, such as, "Will you play with me?" and "You wanna play with blocks?"; conversation openers which reflected their developing awareness of adult interaction etiquette; and nonverbal entry strategies which were similar to those found among younger children. "Ways to check on standings with peers" was an affiliation strategy domain divided between direct and indirect ways of requesting feedback from peers. Direct requests left children vulnerable to direct rejection and were used less frequently than indirect requests such as, "We're the same, huh?" A third set of strategies for accomplishing affiliation goals was "ways to express feelings of affection and belonging." This domain included direct expressions such as, "I like you, do you like me?"; effusive expressions which included showers of

praise, gifts, and other forms of attention; cooperative expressions through which children demonstrated their awareness of adult valued qualities such as being courteous, helpful, and cooperative; expressions of loyalty and sympathy which validated children as caring and devoted friends; and physical expressions which were important tools in children's efforts to communicate their feelings of affection and belonging.

Competence goals were those related to children's communicative efforts to establish themselves as able students in the perceptions of peers and to gain the security of knowing that they were competent students, capable of meeting school expectations. In pursuing this broad social goal, children established an atmosphere in which peer evaluation was the norm. Children offered evaluations of the work of others and expected evaluations in return.

Two domains related to competence goals were identified. "Ways to request evaluation" was the first. Strategies within this domain were classified as direct and indirect. Direct requests included such questions as, "Look at this?" or "How's this?" and questions that had a "loaded" quality, for example, "Oh, yours is good, is mine good?" Indirect requests for evaluation reflected the taken-for-granted nature of evaluation in the classroom. Children had only to announce "finished" to elicit evaluative feedback from peers. "Ways to respond to evaluation" was the second set of strategies for accomplishing competence goals. While positive

evaluations were met with joy, relief, reciprocal praise, and occasional arrogance, negative evaluations brought out the following strategies: offensive responses such as turning negative judgements back on evaluators, name calling, and attempting to discredit evaluators; laughing it off responses whereby children attempted to diminish the significance of negative evaluations; disclaiming responses through which children attempted to blame outside forces for their errors; denial responses in which children flatly denied the accuracy of negative evaluations; avoidance responses through which children avoided confronting negative feedback; and acceptance responses through which children accepted the accuracy of evaluations and worked to diminish their negative effects.

Status goals were those related to protecting and improving relative position within the classroom status hierarchy. Children exercised sophisticated social knowledge as they attempted to promote their own prestige and influence while diminishing the esteem and power of others. They sought evidence of their superiority, attempted to manipulate, control, and sometimes dominate others, and worked hard to assert their importance in relation to fellow students.

Children utilized a variety of means to accomplish status goals. One set of strategies was "ways to practice self-promotion." It included personal superiority promotions through which children claimed elevated status based

on the quality or quantity of possessions, special knowledge or skill, or exceptional personal qualities; and associative superiority promotions through which they claimed superiority because of special qualities possessed by family members or others with whom the children were closely related. "Ways to respond to self-promotions" was another set of strategies. This set included one-upsmanship and bandwagon strategies through which children diminished the effect of self-promotions by either topping them or identifying themselves with the person or the behavior being promoted; challenging strategies which were designed to discredit the self-promoter or the substance of the promotion; ignoring strategies through which children avoided giving credit for self-promotions by pretending not to observe them; and accepting strategies through which children accepted the validity of peer self-promotions. Another set of strategies for accomplishing status goals was "ways to put others down." Behaviors classified as put-downs included pointing out inadequacies, expressing condescension, name calling, ordering, threatening, intimidating, and rubbing it in. "Ways to respond to put-downs" was the last set of strategies under status goals. It included denial strategies through which children categorically denied the accuracy of information used to put them down, logical strategies which were used to build cases refuting put-downs, offensive strategies in which aggressive put-down attempts were met with equally aggressive responses, covering strategies which children used to salvage some

self-respect when put-downs had been effective, ignoring strategies by which they avoided facing put-down effects, and sympathy seeking strategies through which children accepted the accuracy of put-downs while attempting to reduce the damaging effects.

These findings reveal a small portion of the complex social world of one kindergarten classroom. In the next chapter of this dissertation, these findings will be discussed in relation to theory and research in education, child development, and sociology. Implications for practitioners and researchers will be presented.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are an analytic description of social goals discovered in a single kindergarten classroom. Conclusions and implications drawn from such a study are necessarily limited. There is no suggestion here that identical social interaction patterns would be found in other classroom peer cultures. The power of the findings of this and other such studies is not in their generalizability, as defined by positivistic social scientists, but in their careful documentation of the behavior of particular groups in specific social situations. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) have argued that it is from such studies that descriptions of general social processes ultimately can be derived.

In this chapter, general conclusions are outlined and discussed with reference to socialization, adult interaction, and developmental theories. Finally, implications for researchers and educational practitioners are suggested.

Conclusions and Discussion

The following general conclusions are drawn from the findings of the study.

1. Children placed a high value on affiliation, competence, and status in relationships with their peers.

2. Children's interactions were responsive, not ego-centric.

3. Children's strategies for accomplishing social goals revealed capacities for reasoning and perspective taking.

4. Children's knowledge of adult interaction patterns was substantial, yet incomplete.

5. Children demonstrated their capacities for generating and understanding messages at a symbolic, ceremonial level.

Valuing Affiliation, Competence, and Status

Children in the study had learned to place a high value on the affiliation of peers, the image of academic competence, and a superior status position in relation to others. Their interactions in child-to-child contexts were dominated by efforts to achieve social goals in these three areas. They constructed patterns of expectations and norms which reflected the importance of affiliation, competence, and status in their classroom peer culture.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explain the complex socialization processes through which children internalize cultural values (Denzin, 1977; Dreitzel, 1973; Webb, 1981) or the impact of schooling on such processes (Henry, 1963; 1965; Parsons, 1959). It is interesting to note, nonetheless, the extent to which cultural values related to being associated to others in positive ways, appearing competent at school tasks, and establishing superior

status had been internalized by the young children studied. It may be that the most complete expression of children's social values occurs in face-to-face peer contexts. Peer interactions offer unique opportunities for social expression because children are free to explore relationships with relative equals (Hartup, 1977; Ross, 1983). In adult-child interactions, the taken-for-granted superiority of adults may inhibit children's expression of developing values. Perhaps, as this analysis suggests, the true measure of values internalization by children lies in their behavior in face-to-face peer interaction.

Socialized Versus Egocentric Speech

Based on observations and experiments, Piaget (1959) reported that nearly half of the speech produced by children up to about six years of age is "egocentric," that it is not directed at others to satisfy social needs but is directed toward the speakers themselves. Piaget's findings, according to Goodwin (1980) have "hardened into the dogma that the speech of young children is 'egocentric' until the age of six years" (p. 202). The conversational data of this research support findings of several other studies of children's language that the conversations of young children are typically not egocentric monologues but true interactive exchanges (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Garvey & Hogan, 1973; Keenan, 1977; Rosen & Rosen, 1973).

Piaget contrasted egocentric speech with "socialized" speech. Socialized speech replaces the egocentric variety

at six or seven years and serves such interactive functions as the exchange of information, criticisms, commands, requests, threats, and questions and answers (Piaget, 1959). Socialized speech is responsive as opposed to unilateral. The children in this study were five and six years old, yet their interactions were filled with information sharing, criticisms, commands, and the other functions Piaget said were typical of socialized speech. In addition, the data provide evidence that children were adapting their strategies in response to communicative moves of their peers. The following conversational excerpt contains several elements which demonstrate the "socialized" nature of peer interaction in this study.

While Sandra is away from her work, Elizabeth to the other children at table 2: "Look how bad Sandra's deer (coloring) looks." Teresa reaches out and makes a frowning face on Sandra's paper, says: "Yeah." Benjamin [in a show of solidarity] reaches over and makes a crayon slash on Sandra's paper. Elizabeth makes green spots on Sandra's deer. Rod: "I'm not gonna mark it, you'll get in trouble." Teresa: "Oh, look at Sandra's name. She messed up." Elizabeth looks and nods. Sandra returns, discovers her paper, moves close to Benjamin, says: "Who did that?" Benjamin looks around to see who's listening, says: "Elizabeth." Sandra moves next to Elizabeth, shoves the paper forward, says: "Why . . . (pause) Why did you do that?" Elizabeth removes her eyes from Sandra's stare, says: "I didn't do it." Sandra looks at Teresa: "Why did you do this?" Teresa: "I didn't." Sandra: "Did you do this, Dee Dee?" Dee Dee: "Uh-un." (Dee Dee looks at Elizabeth as she speaks.) Sandra to Elizabeth: "You did it and I know it. You're mean, mean, mean. I'm gonna call you mean all week. Meany, meany, meany." The bell rings and groups are changed.

Although occasional events were observed which might fit Piaget's description of egocentric speech, the overwhelming majority of children's conversations were very much like the complex interaction quoted above. Data from this study support Goodwin's (1980) contention that children are capable of socialized speech from a very early age. This study suggests that such capacities are well developed by age five or six.

Reasoning and Perspective Taking

Tied to the notion of egocentric speech are beliefs that young children are developmentally incapable of using reasoning or taking the point of view of others into account in their interactions. Piaget (1969) wrote

Conversations among young children remain rudimentary and linked to material action itself. Until seven years of age children scarcely know how to have discussions among themselves and confine themselves to make contradictory affirmations. (p. 20)

This study's conversational transcripts are filled with evidence that runs counter to Piaget's assertions on the rudimentary nature of children's conversations. As strategies for accomplishing social goals were discovered, it became evident that children were using reason to construct cases and build logical responses to peer questions and challenges. Two examples of children's uses of reason follow:

Four girls enter the playhouse. Sue:
"Who's gonna be the mother?" Dee Dee:
"I am. I'm biggest." [She looks like a
third grader] Sandra: "I am." Sue

[in 'take charge' voice]: "Elizabeth." Dee Dee stands next to Elizabeth and holds her hand next to Elizabeth's head to show how much taller she is. Dee Dee: "Elizabeth." Elizabeth to Dee Dee: "You can be the big teenager. Teenagers are bigger than mothers." Dee Dee shrugs.

Tess: "I'm almost done colorin'." Robin mocking : "Do da-ba no da-ba-do." (Baby talk in same meter as Tess' speech.) George: "Robin, don't start actin' up now." Nadine: "Know what? If you talk like that, you won't be able to . . . (pause) you will always talk like that." Robin: "Do-do ga-ga." Nadine: "You keep talkin' like that and you won't be able to stop. You'll always hafta talk like that." Tess: "Yeah, my grandmother talked like that when she was a little girl and she don't talk right now." Robin seems to be thinking this over. Tess: "I know that's so 'cause I asked my grandma. She didn't talk right and now she don't know how."

Several things become clear when looking at these and other examples from the conversational data. Children's interactions were complex. They listened to each other and constructed cases based on the positions taken by others. They marshaled evidence for their positions and evaluated the merit of their peers' arguments. Children's conversations did not qualify as "collective monologue" which Piaget explained, "is really a mutual excitation to action rather than a real exchange of ideas" (1969, p. 20). The findings of this study parallel those of Rosen and Rosen (1973). In both studies, it was clear from analyzing conversations that children were not talking to themselves but participating in dynamic, interactive dialogue.

Children's Use of Adult Interaction Rituals

Goffman (1963) referred to children as "communication delinquents" because often they violate the rules of adult interaction. Analysis of the interactions of children revealed that, indeed, their knowledge of ritualized adult etiquette was incomplete. However, their interactions were surprisingly sophisticated. Students utilized patterns ritualized by adults and demonstrated their developing understandings of adult interaction etiquette.

Goffman's sociology of face-to-face interaction has provided an interesting and revealing perspective from which to consider adult social behavior. A central theme in Goffman's work is the idea of interaction ritual. He argues that social order is constructed from the hellos, goodbyes, compliments, apologies, and courtesies that are taken for granted in adult relations. These ritualized communications are the conventionalized means by which ceremonial respect and regard for others are expressed (Geiser, 1977). Goffman details the patterns which define several types of interpersonal rituals (1963; 1967; 1971). The object of this study was not to explore children's use of interaction rituals (see Hatch, 1984 for such an analysis). However, while doing classroom observations and searching the data for interaction patterns, it became apparent that children's knowledge of adult rituals was substantial, yet incomplete.

The most striking area in which children's face-to-face behavior differed from adult patterns was access rituals--

"the little ceremonies of greeting and farewell which occur when people begin a conversational encounter or depart from one" (Goffman, 1967, p. 41). Adults use greetings to mark their intentions to engage in conversation, to reestablish roles that have been taken in previous encounters, and to signal their intent to behave according to the norms of polite interaction (Goffman, 1967; 1971). Children's greetings were not unknown in the study. They said "Hi" or "Hey" to others as they entered the classroom in the morning. However, reciprocal greetings, which are required in adult interaction, were virtually unknown. Completely absent were examples of the standardized adult pattern: "Hi, how are you?" "Fine, thanks. And you?"

Greetings were infrequent and unilateral. Farewells were virtually unknown in children's interactions. That child-to-child conversations lacked the closure which typifies adult interchanges was an early frustration for the researcher. Almost immediately in the analysis-observation cycle, it was discovered that children did not require a ritualized set of verbal or nonverbal markers to signal ends of conversations. Interactions seemed to "fizzle" without the concluding statements found in adult conversation.

Although their greetings and farewells were unlike those of adults, children demonstrated well-developed knowledge of many components of mature interaction etiquette. Within the "ways to make contact" reported in the findings, was

evidence of emerging understandings of many of the norms and rules which define adult interaction. For example, children used courtesies and compliments in ways very much like adults; that is, to signal that they can be trusted to respect the self others are projecting in the interaction (Goffman, 1971).

Children had learned the importance of managing impressions in their peer relations. The domain of "status goals" and strategies for achieving them is a study of children's impression management techniques. Status among child peers, as with adults, rests in the perceptions of others. Status is renegotiated at every interchange and considerable social knowledge is required to operate successfully. The following are some examples of children's strategies which parallel adult impression management techniques described by Goffman (1959; 1967; 1971):

1. Children used hedging, joking, and teasing to protect their overtures toward others from the embarrassment of possible rejection.
2. They aggressively promoted their own status by offering favorable information about themselves while introducing unfavorable facts about others.
3. They challenged children who attempted to acquire status to which they were not entitled.
4. Children used sophisticated means to answer the challenges of others, including denials, explanations, excuses, and apologies.

It is difficult to explain why children seem at once adult-like and juvenile in their interactions. Developmental theories, as suggested above, seem by themselves to

be inadequate to the task. The worlds of children are complex. Children are learning and practicing social behavior in a variety of contexts with a variety of interaction partners.

Gleason and Weintraub (1976) pointed out that adults, usually parents, formally train their children to use verbal routines (e.g., "Say bye-bye," "What do you say?" "Say Hello to Mrs. Jones") and that children learn to produce correct routines long before they learn what it means to do so. These same routines are not a part of spontaneous interactions among children. It may be that formally teaching children to parrot access rituals has fallen on parents because such skills do not grow out of children's informal interactions with adults or other children. Adults, other than parents, do not demand ritual displays because of their shared perceptions of children's social immaturity (Gleason & Weintraub, 1976). Other children do not require access rituals perhaps because they see no function for them and sense no disequilibrium when such rituals are omitted.

In contrast, presentation rituals such as shows of politeness, deference, and appreciation (Goffman, 1967) and impression management rituals such as those described above help children accomplish their social goals. Describing the processes of learning adult interaction patterns is certainly beyond the scope of this study. However, it may be important to note that for these children the development of ritualistic forms was closely related to the functionality

of those rituals in satisfying needs for affiliation, competence, and status.

The Social Functions of Interaction

This study focused on children's constructions of social events. It was framed within a symbolic interactionist perspective. Fundamental to that perspective is the axiom that individuals use the processes of interaction to form shared definitions of social situations (Blumer, 1969). Effective participation in the construction of shared definitions requires the ability to generate and interpret symbolic communication--hence the term symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Spradley, 1980).

Children in the study demonstrated their capacities for utilizing symbolic, or ceremonial, communication to construct social events among themselves. Descriptions of the ways children went about accomplishing their social goals document patterns of behavior which include symbolic communication. For these children, an important function of child-to-child interaction was the satisfaction of social goals. Much of that satisfaction was accomplished at the ceremonial level of communication.

Taking the ceremonial level into account adds depth to considerations of the functions of children's talk. Descriptions of functions of children's communication (e.g., Halliday, 1975; Piaget, 1959; Schachter, Kirshner, Klips, Friedricks, & Sanders, 1974) have not addressed directly the functional role of ceremonial interchange. An important

richness can be added to understandings of communicative functions by including the ceremonial dimension.

Halliday (1975) identified a "regulatory" function which provides children with the capacity for controlling the behavior of others. Along the same lines, Piaget (1959) described "commands, requests, and threats;" and Schachter et al. (1974) identified "desire implementation" categories. On the surface, these functions make sense given the findings of this study. Examples of each of these functional categories could be found in the data. The point is not that these functional descriptions are inaccurate, but that a richer understanding of interactive functions can be gained by looking below the surface.

The regulatory function described by Halliday, for example, is related to status goals described in the present study. Among status goals is the desire to influence or control the actions of peers. A careful analysis of the ways children go about influencing and controlling others, however, reveals interactive functions beyond simple regulating. As children in the study attempted to control others, they were promoting their relative status among their peers. Their actions took into account calculations of the symbolic advantage to be derived from control efforts along with the risk of embarrassment should those efforts fail to succeed. When reacting to the control efforts of others, protecting status became important and moves designed symbolically to minimize damaging effects were taken.

Social goals and the patterns of behavior children construct to accomplish them offer an enriched perspective to considerations of the functions of children's communication. By adding functions at the ceremonial level (e.g., to accomplish affiliation, competence, and status goals) additional understanding can be gained.

Goffman's (1959; 1963; 1967; 1971) work has revealed that society is constituted in the micro-order of the specific activities and communications of everyday face-to-face interaction. This micro-order must be created anew at each interactive encounter. Re-creation is accomplished using a ritualized exchange of cues and gestures through which participants indicate to one another the roles they intend to take and the roles they expect others are taking (Geiser, 1977). These cues and gestures make up the symbolic medium of ceremonial communication. Interpersonal rituals based in ceremonial communication provide the organizing structures which define civil relations in society. Children must learn to understand and create communications in the ceremonial idiom to function in adult society. It is this ceremonial function of communication that largely is missing from descriptions of children's language functions. It is the illumination of this function that can add depth to existing descriptions.

ImplicationsFor Researchers

This study is an exploration into the social world of one kindergarten classroom. It is a description and analysis of the face-to-face reality constructed by five- and six-year-olds in school. The ethnographic approach taken in the study and the descriptive quality of the findings qualify the research for inclusion in what Wolcott (1976) called, "a growing literature that only collectively will constitute the ethnography of American schooling" (p. 24). The study documents children's social goals and strategies for accomplishing them in a particular setting. The findings make possible cross-contextual comparisons which may be useful to educational anthropologists and others interested in the construction of a collective ethnography.

The study of children's social goals adds an additional layer to considerations of the functions of communications in children. It may be that researchers interested in studying the forms and functions of children's talk will benefit from the added depth suggested by the social goals construct. Understanding that children's social relations are complex and that their face-to-face interactions include symbolic, "ceremonial" communications may influence researchers to ask broader kinds of questions as they study children's talk. Further, the methodological approach to uncovering such taken-for-granted phenomena as social goals demonstrated in this research suggests applications to the study of similarly held social attributes in children.

The influences of peer interaction on the socialization of young children are not well understood. Neither is the interactive process through which children internalize values in their complex encounters across many contexts. Approaching the study of peer interaction and socialization from a face-to-face orientation may offer a fresh way of thinking about these important areas. Educational researchers and other social scientists may find the face-to-face perspective taken in this and similar studies offers enriched understandings of socialization processes. It may be that, in the same way the work of face-to-face sociologists has provided new insight into adult social behavior, so can the application of such a perspective improve understandings of children's social development.

Suggested areas for additional study can be drawn from this report. Valuable insight would be gained by conducting similar classroom studies asking similar questions across a variety of settings. Studies designed to compare social goal development in classrooms with differing organizational formats (open and traditional) or goal structures (cooperative and competitive) would be beneficial. The effects of socioeconomic influences on children's social goals is another area of suggested research emphasis. For instance, it may be that the social goals of children in a low socio-economic status urban kindergarten are different from those developed by children from an upper middle class, suburban background. A large number of classroom studies will be

required to begin to describe the complex influences on social goal development in school.

In an effort to begin to understand how social goals are internalized by children, an involved longitudinal study or series of studies is called for. Such studies would necessarily include investigations of children's interactions at home, in informal play settings, in preschool, and at a series of school grade levels. A careful study of children's social behavior from an interactionist perspective could yield more than just a description of how children develop face-to-face competence. It may be that such a description would provide valuable insights into the very processes of childhood socialization.

For Educators

Hinely and Ponder (1979) made a useful distinction between "improvers" and "describers" as they discussed the development and utilization of theory (p. 135). Researchers interested in improvement begin with questions such as, "How can things be changed?" For describers, three questions are of key importance. "A descriptive question--what seems to be happening here?; an analytical question--why are these events occurring?; and a question of understanding--what do these events mean in the context of the classroom?" (Hinely & Ponder, 1979, p. 135). The study reported here is descriptive. The goal has been to provide a description and analysis intended to improve understandings of what actually happens in the social context of a classroom.

Teachers and others responsible for children's experiences in school will find the descriptive findings of this study useful in understanding the ecology of classroom cultures. Teachers are observers of child behavior, hypotheses makers, and planners (Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982). The descriptions and analyses of this study may give teachers an alternative framework from which to understand social interaction in their classrooms and new ways of thinking about children's motives and values.

Three specific suggestions for classroom practice are offered. First, it may be that peer interaction contributes a great deal to the individual social and psychological development of children. That being the case, suggestions that children be given a wide variety of opportunities to interact with peers in a variety of classroom contexts seem appropriate (Black, 1979; Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1979).

A second suggestion is that teachers exercise restraint when intervening in children's interactions. The social motives of children are complex and often not readily apparent. Unless children become disruptive, destructive, or cruel, teachers should avoid direct interventions. This does not mean teachers should abstain from teaching social skills or coaching children who are having difficulties getting along with their peers (Rogers & Ross, 1984). Teachers should make every effort to assist their students in making a healthy social adjustment. Important elements of that adjustment are worked out in interactions with peers. Teachers

serve their students' needs by refraining from too quickly imposing adult solutions on children's interpersonal encounters.

Third, teachers should make an effort to model adult interaction etiquette in their teacher-child interactions. The incomplete quality of child-to-child interactions described in the study is overcome as children learn to participate in interactions in a variety of settings with a variety of interaction partners. By consciously modeling access rituals such as greetings and farewells, teachers can "teach" the social behavior which gives closure and structure to interaction.

Genishi (1979) wrote on the similarities between teachers and researchers. She observed that both value information about how children behave and think, and both seek to facilitate children's learning and development. Genishi summarized: "The teacher of young children cannot teach successfully, nor can the researcher investigate fully, unless both consider what children themselves experience and think" (1979, p. 249). If this study has accomplished its aims, it is an analytic consideration of what children themselves experience and think. If teachers are encouraged to bring such considerations to their work having read this report, the research will have been of benefit.

APPENDIX A:
TEACHER'S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

January 1983

Dear Teacher:

As you know, classroom environments are complex and dynamic. Among the important social lessons taught through the experience of schooling are those related to children's interaction. I have become interested specifically in learning more about how young children interact in kindergarten classrooms. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral dissertation to help me study the interaction patterns in your classrooms.

Specifically, I will be asking you to allow me to observe approximately 5 hours a week in your classroom for 18-20 weeks, to examine classroom materials and children's work, to interview you about your instructional program, and to review class and school records in order to gather data about the total classroom context.

All data will be held confidential to the extent provided by law. No one will see your name, your students' names, or the school name in connection with this study. You may withdraw at any time, without prejudice.

No monetary compensation will be awarded and there are no risks or immediate benefits foreseen as a result of this study. I would be glad to share the results with you at the completion of the study. I would also be glad to give you a copy of my abstract.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I would appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

J. Amos Hatch

I have read and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

SIGNATURES:

Teacher

Date

Witness

Date
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APPENDIX B:
PARENTS' INFORMED CONSENT FORM

February 1983

Dear Parents:

I am a graduate student in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Florida. I am working on my dissertation to complete the requirements for the doctoral degree. The purpose of my study is to describe and analyze relationships among children in a kindergarten classroom.

As a part of my study, I will be observing in your child's classroom approximately 5 hours a week for 18-20 weeks, examining children's work and other classroom materials, reviewing school and class records, and interviewing the teacher. I will be making every effort to ensure your child's classroom will function just as it would if I were not present. The result of this study will be a report describing the classroom setting.

Your child will be protected by an anonymous coding procedure during the observation process. Student scores and other records, will be kept confidential to the extent the law provides. Student, class, or school names will not be used in connection with this study.

There are no risks and no immediate benefits foreseen as a result of this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time. No monetary compensation will be awarded for participation.

I would appreciate it if you would give me permission to observe in your child's classroom, examine materials, and review records.

Sincerely,

J. Amos Hatch

I have read and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to allow my child, _____, to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Parent/Guardian Date Witness Date

Relationship to subject *Principle Investigator* *(circled)*

Address _____

141 Phone _____

APPENDIX C:

NAMES BY GROUP ASSIGNMENT,
RACE, AND SEX

Table 1

	<u>Race</u>	<u>Sex</u>
James	Black	Male
Sarah	White	Female
Roger	White	Male
Terry	White	Female
Bob	White	Male
Jerome ^{1, 2}	Black	Male
Frank ¹	White	Male

Table 2

George	White	Male
Tess	White	Female
Nadine	Black	Female
Robin	White	Male
Sue	White	Female
Louise	White	Female

Table 3

Gina	White	Female
Phillip	White	Male
Holly	White	Female
Amy	White	Female
Eddy	Black	Male
Cheryl	White	Female

Table 4

Elizabeth	White	Female
Teresa	White	Female
Sandra	White	Female
Rod	White	Male
Benjamin	White	Male
Dee Dee	White	Female
Don ²	White	Male

¹Entered class during study²Withdrew during study

APPENDIX D:
TAXONOMY OF SOCIAL GOALS

Social Goals

A. Affiliation Goal Domain

1. Ways to Make Contact
 - a. Direct Requests
 - b. Conversation Openers
 - c. Nonverbal Entry
2. Ways to Check on Standings with Peers
 - a. Direct Requests
 - b. Indirect Requests
3. Ways to Express Feelings of Affection and Belonging
 - a. Direct Expressions
 - b. Effusive Expressions
 - c. Cooperative Expressions
 - d. Expressions of Loyalty and Sympathy
 - e. Physical Expressions

B. Competence Goal Domain

1. Ways to Request Evaluation
 - a. Direct Requests
 - b. Indirect Requests
2. Ways to Respond to Evaluation
 - a. Offensive Responses
 - b. Laughing It Off Responses
 - c. Disclaiming Responses
 - d. Denial Responses
 - e. Avoidance Responses
 - f. Acceptance Responses

C. Status Goal Domain

1. Ways to Practice Self-Promotion
 - a. Personal Superiority Promotions
 - b. Associative Superiority Promotions
2. Ways to Respond to Self-Promotions
 - a. One-upsmanship Strategies
 - b. Bandwagon Strategies
 - c. Challenging Strategies
 - d. Ignoring Strategies
 - e. Accepting Strategies
3. Ways to Put Others Down
 - a. Pointing Out Inadequacies
 - b. Expressing Condescension
 - c. Name Calling
 - d. Ordering
 - e. Threatening
 - f. Intimidating
 - g. Rubbing It In
4. Ways to Respond to Put-Downs
 - a. Denial Strategies
 - b. Logical Strategies
 - c. Offensive Strategies
 - d. Covering Strategies
 - e. Ignoring Strategies
 - f. Sympathy Seeking Strategies

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

J. Amos Hatch holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Utah and a Master of Education degree from the University of North Florida. At the University of Florida, he has majored in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in elementary education.

His professional career has included several years of public school teaching, service as a school-based resource teacher, and supervision at the school district level. While in residence at the University of Florida, he was employed as a graduate instructor in the Childhood Education Program.

He has published several articles on a variety of topics and presented papers at national, state, and regional research conferences. His articles have appeared in such journals as Childhood Education, Educational Forum, Viewpoints in Teaching and Learning, Urban Education, and the Journal of Humanistic Education. He has presented research papers at annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, the Eastern Educational Research Association, the Florida Reading Association, and the Florida Educational Research and Development Council.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Suzanne M. Kinzer
Suzanne M. Kinzer, Chairman
Associate Professor of
General Teacher Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dorene D. Ross
Dorene D. Ross
Associate Professor of
General Teacher Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Rodman B. Webb
Rodman B. Webb
Associate Professor of
Foundations of Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Athol B. Packer
Athol B. Packer
Associate Professor of
General Teacher Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

James W. Longstreth
James W. Longstreth
Associate Professor of
Educational Administration
and Supervision

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the Division of Curriculum and Instruction in the College
of Education and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted
as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dean for Graduate Studies
and Research